CEMBER

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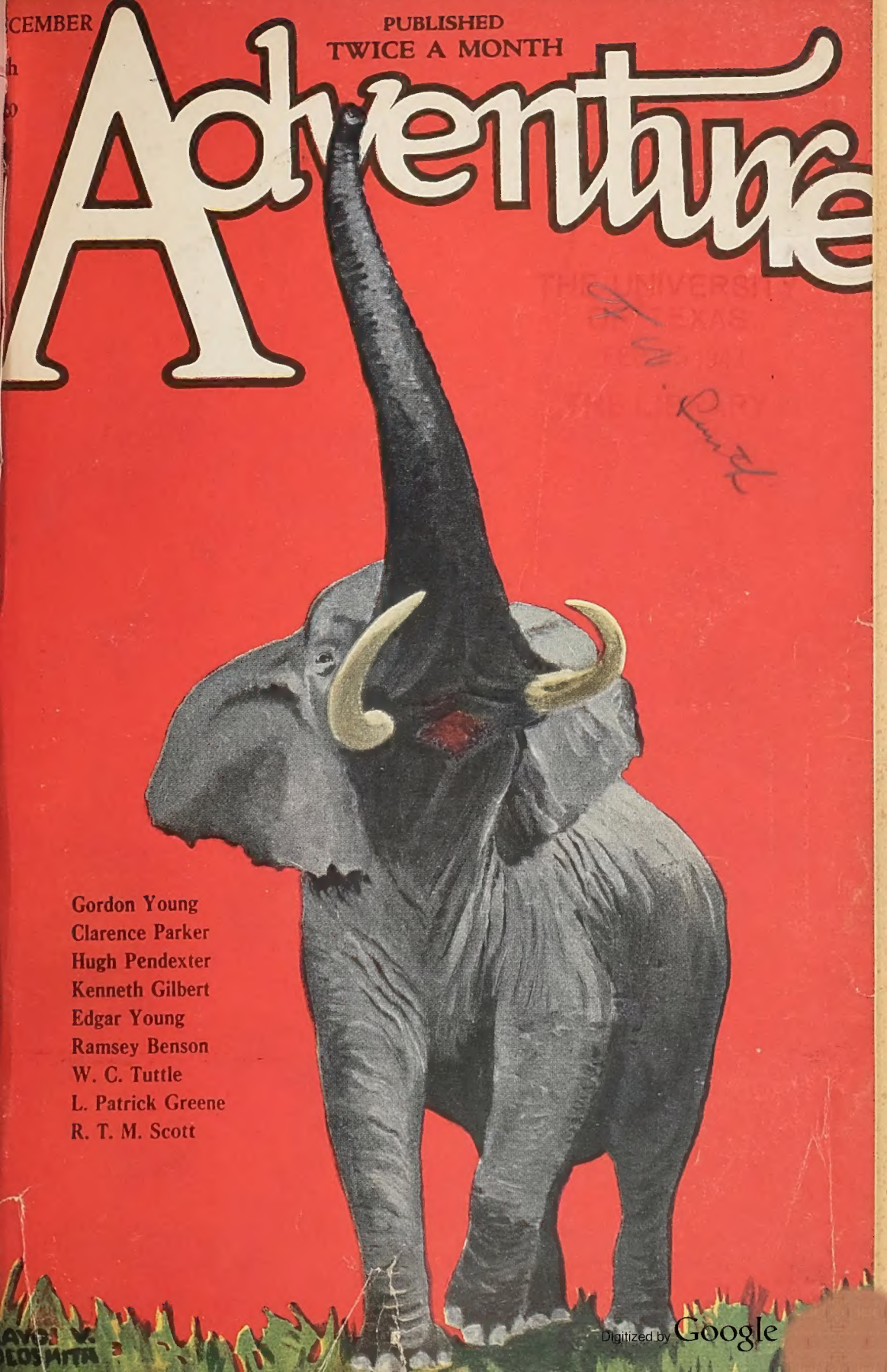
PUBLISHED
TWICE A MONTH

Adventure



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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
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"Take it from Father!"

A Durham-Duplex Razor! Handsomely finished—durable—useful! No gift from a father to a son could be more sensible.

Father is thoroughly familiar with the wonderful shaving qualities of the oil-tempered, hollow-ground, double-edged Durham-Duplex blades.

"Take it from him" that when he gives you a Durham-Duplex, he gives you not only a nifty Christmas present but a lifelong guarantee of shaving comfort.

Standard Set One Dollar Complete. Razor with attractive American ivory handle, safety guard and package of three Durham-Duplex blades (6 shaving edges) all in handsome American ivory case.

Christmas Model Two Dollars. Same as above but with gold plated blade holder and safety guard.

Other Sets up to $12.

Additional Blades 50c for a package of 5

DURHAM-DUPLEX RAZOR CO., Jersey City, New Jersey
FACTORIES
JERSEY CITY, U.S.A. SHEFFIELD, ENG.
PARIS, FRANCE TORONTO, CANADA
Sales Representatives in all Countries.

DURHAM-DUPLEX

A Real Razor-made Safe

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FREE TRIAL OFFER

Be Your Own Salesman and Save $36—

New Oliver Typewriters for $64

Let us send you a brand new Oliver Nine — the world-famous typewriter — for five days' free trial. Keep it or return it.

That is our plan in a nutshell. Our new plan — besides saving you $36 — makes it easy for every one to convince himself of Oliver superiority. No red tape — no money down. No salesman need influence you. No need to ever pay $100 for a typewriter again.

Prices Cut to Nearly Half— and Why

With greater production and huge financial resources, The Oliver Typewriter Company is the pace setter.

Its officials seek to relieve the public of a useless tax. In the past, it has cost $36 to sell typewriters through an expensive sales force — high rents for offices in many cities — and other frills. All are wasteful from an economic viewpoint. That is why Oliver Nines are shipped direct from the factory to the users — on free trial. This permits us to sell machines to you for $64. You get the saving.

This plan, we feel sure, is in keeping with modern demands. All will welcome such a sincere effort to reduce the High Cost of Typewriters.

This is Our Offer

No money down—easy monthly payments

Maker and user deal direct. You are your own salesman. You pay yourself the $36. Own this master typewriter at the rate of $4 per month. The Oliver Nine itself must convince you. It is the greatest, the most durable, the most successful typewriter ever built. No finer can be bought for any price. It is a twenty-year development.

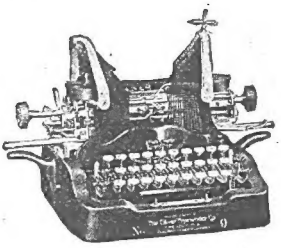
There is no need now to ever pay $100 again for a new typewriter. The Oliver plan gives everyone an opportunity to own an Oliver. And at the lowest time payments.

This is the same machine used by the largest concerns. It has all the latest improvements.

For speed and fine workmanship it can't be beat.

If, after a trial of five days you are not satisfied — ship it back at our expense.

MAIL TODAY



Over 800,000 Sold

Do not confuse

This $64 Oliver is our latest and best model. It is not a special model — but the identical machine that was $100 before the war. Reduced selling expenses saves you $36.

Some of the big concerns using Olivers are: U. S. Steel Corp., Standard Oil Co., National City Bank of N. Y., Montgomery Ward, Pennsylvania R. R. The Oliver is famous the world over. You can now own one for 13c per day.

13 cents a day

Easy payments of $4 per month. This in addition to our cutting the price in two. Could any one go further? Yet we offer this free trial without obligation on your part. The plan is daring — but we believe discerning people will respond.

This is the first time in history that a new, never-used $100 typewriter of the latest model has been offered at the price of cheaper or second-hand machines. It is cheaper to own than rent.

No money down

Simply send in the coupon properly filled in. There is no red tape — no collectors — no bother. Keep the Oliver for $4 per month. Or return it. It is up to you.

Mail the coupon today.

Canadian Price, $82

The OLIVER Typewriter Company

739 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER COMPANY
739 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

☐ Ship me a new Oliver Nine for five days free inspection. If I keep it, I will pay $64 at the rate of $4 per month. The title to remain in you until fully paid for.

My shipping point is.....

This does not place me under any obligation to buy. If I choose to return the Oliver, I will ship it back at your expense at the end of five days.

☐ Do not send a machine until I order it. Mail me your book—"The High Cost of Typewriters —The Reason and the Remedy," your de luxe catalog and further information.

Name .....

Street Address .....

City..... State.....

Occupation or Business.....

ADVENTURE
Dec. 18th, 1920

Published twice a month by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. Yearly subscription $4.00 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Oct. 1, 1910, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Volume 27
Number 6

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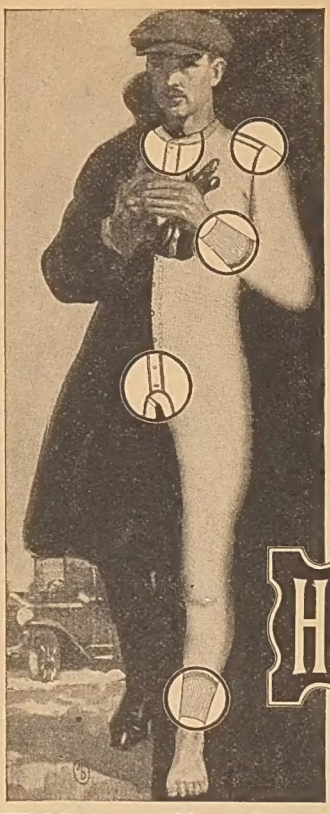

It pays to put underwear money into "HANES"

—bigger value, longer wear and greater comfort!

HANES

ELASTIC KNIT
UNDERWEAR

Read Hanes Guarantee:

"We guarantee Hanes Underwear absolutely—every thread, stitch and button. We guarantee to return your money or give you a new garment if any seam breaks."

FOR years "Hanes" winter underwear for men has proven itself to be the *national underwear standard;* its sales exceed any elastic knit underwear! Its popularity extends from coast-to-coast!

"Hanes" wins on merit! It is not fancy underwear, but it has enduring quality in its Hanes-spun yarn, in its "Hanes" directed workmanship! And, its warmth, its service and its comfort cannot be exceeded at the price!

Your confidence in every "Hanes" garment, in every "Hanes" thread and stitch can never be misplaced! *"Hanes" guarantee proves that!*

"HANES" underwear is made in heavy and medium winter weight union suits and heavy weight shirts and drawers. The medium weight garment, new this year and illustrated in this advertisement, is of interest to every man who works indoors. It is made of full combed yarn, is silk trimmed and carries the new yellow label.

"Hanes" Union Suits have the tailored collarette that fits closely and will not gap; closed crotch stays closed; an extra gusset gives extra thigh comfort; buttonholes will not stretch and last the life of the garment; pearl buttons sewed on to stay; elastic knit cuffs and ankles hold their shape; flat unbreakable seams. Shirts have the snug fitting "Hanes" elastic knit collarette, and elastic knit wrists. Drawers are cut roomy and have the durable "Hanes" 3-button sateen waist band.

"Hanes" for boys are unmatchable!

Put the boys into "Hanes" Union Suits—the biggest value in quality, wear, warmth and comfort for boys ever sold at the price. These boys' suits duplicate the men's Union Suits in important features with added fleeciness. Made in sizes 20 to 34, covering ages from 2 to 16 years. Two to four year old sizes have drop seat.

Inspect these remarkable "Hanes" garments at your dealer's—at once. If he cannot supply you, write us.

P. H. HANES KNITTING CO., Winston-Salem, N. C. *New York Office 366 Broadway*

Next Summer—You'll want to wear Hanes Nainsook Union Suits!

Warning to the trade: Any garment offered as "Hanes" is a substitute unless it bears the "Hanes" label.

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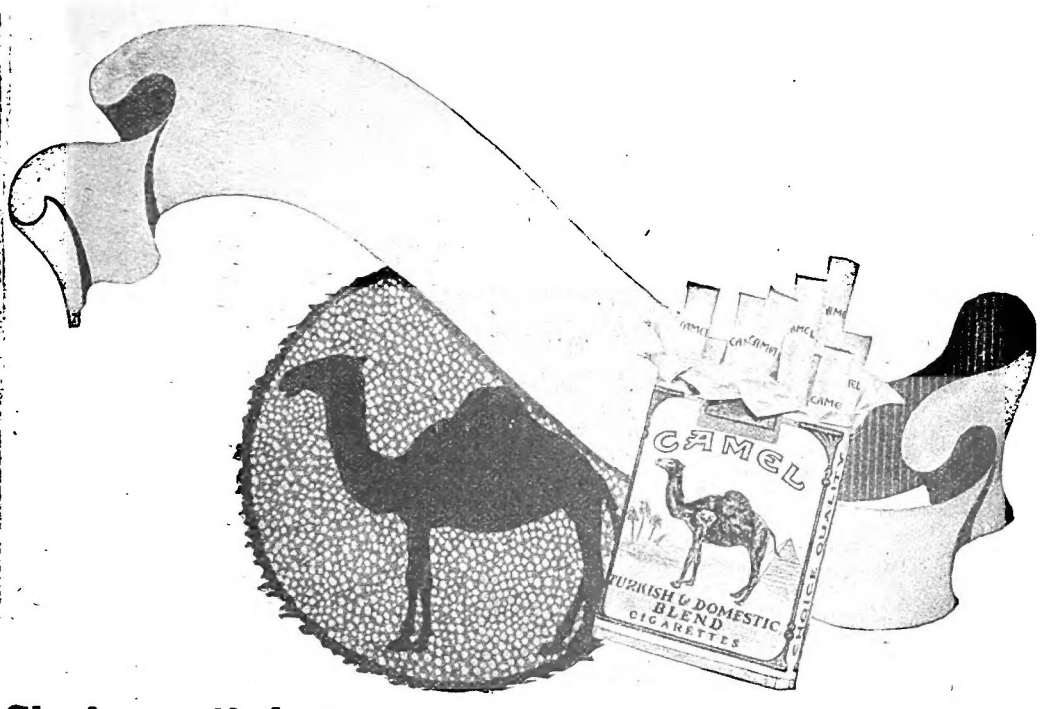

Check up all that Camels offer you!

ANY *one* of Camels many points of absolute superiority makes them a delight to the most fastidious cigarette smoker! But, consider *all* that Camels pass you:—

Unequalled quality — a really wonderful blend of choice Turkish and choice Domestic tobaccos—a flavor as distinctive and refreshing as it is appetizing—smooth mellow mildness never before attained in a cigarette—freedom from any unpleasant cigaretty odor!

And, when you compare Camels with any cigarette in the world at any price, you will note that *Camels never tire your taste,* no matter how liberally you smoke!

Camels are sold everywhere in scientifically sealed packages of 20 cigarettes for 20 cents.

Camel CIGARETTES

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

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When the Rattlesnake Struck

Judge!

When you sent me up for four years you called me a rattlesnake. Maybe I am one—anyhow, you hear me rattling now. One year after I got to the pen, my daughter died of—well, they said it was poverty and the disgrace together. You've got a daughter, Judge, and I'm going to make you know how it feels to lose one. I'm free now, and I guess I've turned to rattlesnake all right. Look out when I strike.

Yours respectfully,
RATTLESNAKE.

This is the beginning of one of the stories by

O. HENRY

274 Complete Stories—One Long Novel

For years now you have heard of O. Henry—you have read these advertisements and thought that some day you would own a set for yourself. But you have put off the sending from month to month. The time for that is gone. *Now—today*—you must order your set of O. Henry to get the low price and the Oppenheim FREE!

So great is the popularity of O. Henry—so enormous is the demand for his books—that we should like for all time to continue this offer. But we can't. It costs more than twice as much now to make the sets as it did. Paper costs more—ink costs more; binding costs more. So we must withdraw this offer. But as long as the stock now on hand lasts, you can get O. Henry at the low price, and—

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM — 7 Volumes — FREE

Seven splendid volumes, packed full of mystery and adventure, love and intrigue. Here are some of the most wonderfully exciting stories in the literature of the world. Seven stories of plot and counterplot—gripping, thrilling tales that will keep you entranced from the first word to the last.

Whether it be in the lonely wastes of the North Atlantic—the vague mystery of a London fog—out on the desolate moor—or amid the gay midnight follies of Monte Carlo, Oppenheim always has a thrilling, gripping story to tell.

He makes them so real that you forget everything about you in the joy of them. He lets you into secrets that take your breath away. He shows you the real inner workings of European diplomacy. He holds you enthralled with the romance, the mystery of his tale right to the very last word.

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KNOWING HOW is the thing that puts the big pay in the pay-envelope. It's the thing that lifts men out of a poor-paying job into a man's size job with a man's size pay. *The man with the "know how" under his hat always wins out.* No matter what kind of work you are doing, or what you expect to do—you can learn more about that work and get more money for doing it. You don't have to go to school. Neither do you take any special training. One of these home study courses in book form gives you all the "know how" you need.

Some of the world's greatest experts prepared these books just to help ambitious men get ahead. They are written in plain, good old U. S. language that anyone can understand. No puzzling technical terms. Everything is explained. Thousands of pictures, plans, blueprints, diagrams, etc., in each set. Over 100,000 sets have been sold. Pick out a set in line with your ambition and send the FREE TRIAL coupon that brings the books without your sending any money in advance.

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Carpentry and Contracting, 5 volumes, 2138 pages, 1000 pictures. Was $37.50. Now 24.80

Civil Engineering, 9 volumes, 3900 pages, 3000 pictures. Was $67.50. Now 39.80

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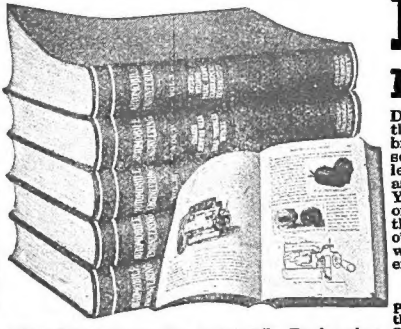
SPECIAL With each set of these books goes a one-year membership in our society. This entitles you to consult our engineers and experts on any subject connected with your work FREE. This membership usually sells for $12.00.



This picture shows the Automobile Engineering Books, five volumes closed and one open. The bindings will last a lifetime.

FREE Examination!

Don't send one penny. Just fill out the coupon and mail it. This will bring any set you select (the whole set, not a sample) by express collect. The books will be yours to use as you please for an entire week. You be the judge and decide whether or not they will do for you what they have done for thousands of other men. If you don't think they will help you, send them back at our expense and you won't owe a cent.

75 Cents a Week

Pay only $2.80 within 1 week if you keep the books and send us $3 each month until the special reduced price is paid. This amounts to about 10 cents a day. Mail coupon NOW. You'll be mighty glad you did when pay day comes 'round.

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. X-109, Chicago

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. X-109, Chicago, U. S. A.

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Reference.....

Please fill out all lines.

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MEN are wanted by the government, police departments, corporations, banks, institutions and individuals—these men must be trained Finger Print Men—men who have made this work a profession.

Big Salaries

and big rewards go to these experts because they solve mysteries that baffle the most experienced ordinary detectives. The finger print clew is one that cannot fail because no two people in the whole world make the same mark.

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in mastering this fascinating, big money-making profession by studying in your spare time at home. Common school education is all you need. A brilliant career is before you. Finger Print Experts travel everywhere, see the country, live in the best hotels and have all expenses paid. There is a crying need for such men right now. This profession is not crowded. Get started at once—right now—and be one of the *big men* in the field. Get our free book today.

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PLAY BOX BALL HERE 5¢ A GAME

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"The Game That Makes Fortunes"

Make $100 a Week

Open American Box Ball Alleys in your neighborhood. Make 1200 per cent per year. $100 a week. Box Ball is nearly all clear profit. No salaries to pay. No pin boys. Pins are reset and balls returned by automatic device. New electric-lighted automatic scoreboard, an attractive feature.

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Scores of Box Ball proprietors are making $100 a week from just two alleys. C. T. Patterson, of Illinois, opened three alleys and cleaned up $800.70 the first two months. Now he operates eight alleys and out of the proceeds has built a beautiful 3-story home.

Use Our Money to Start

We help you start. Very little cash needed. Small payment down. Balance from your profits. Learn what others have done. Write today for money-making proposition and full description of the equipment. Mail a post card now.

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891 Van Buren St.
Indianapolis, Ind.

If You Can Tell it from a GENUINE DIAMOND Send it back

To prove our blue-white MEXICAN DIAMOND closely resembles a genuine diamond with same DAZZLING RAINBOW FIRE, we will send a selected 1 carat gem in Ladies' Tiffany Style Ring (Cat. price $4.98) for **Half Price to introduce, $2.63,** or in Gents' Heavy Tooth Belcher Ring (Cat. price $6.26) for $3.25. Our finest 12k Gold Filled mountings. GUARANTEED 20 YEARS. **SEND NO MONEY.** Just mail postcard or this ad. State Size. We will mail at once C. O. D. If not pleased return in 2 days for money back less handling charges. Write for **Free** Catalog. **Agents Wanted.**

MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING CO., Dept. AE, Las Cruces, N. Mex.
(Exclusive controllers Mexican Diamonds)

GET BIG BUSH OFFER

We do not deal through distributors but County Agents only. GET OUR BIG MONEY CATALOG TODAY. Don't wait. Learn how you, in your spare time, can make Big Money introducing Bush Cars in your County. The cars with Money-Back guarantee. Bush light four and De Luxe six. Don't wait. Write today!

Big Money-Making Offer for County Agents Only

BUSH MOTOR CO., Chicago, Illinois, Dept. S-180 Bush Temple

Money!

Make lots of it in your spare time. Write Staff Agencies Division, Box 618, Butterick Building, New York.

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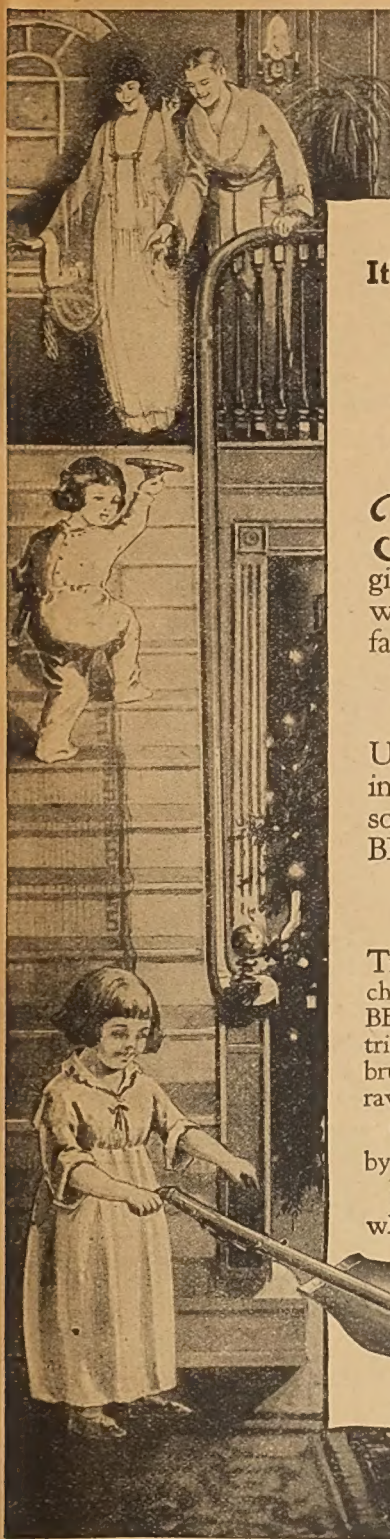


Look what Santa brought Mamma!

It's a **BEE-VAC**

ELECTRIC CLEANER

THOUSANDS of women's hearts will be gladdened Xmas morning by the gift of gifts—a BEE-VAC *Electric Cleaner.* If you want to see real happiness on "friend wife's" face, get her a BEE-VAC.

250,000 Sold Without Advertising

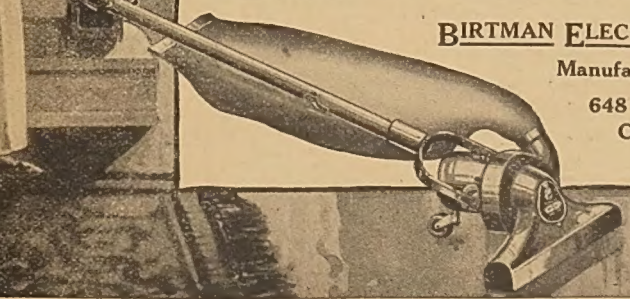
Up to a few months ago not a penny was spent in advertising to the public. The BEE-VAC sold on merit. You, too, will appreciate BEE-VAC superiority.

Ask Your Dealer to Demonstrate

Try it personally—note how light it is—a child can carry it anywhere, and use it, too. The BEE-VAC develops more suction than the average electric vacuum cleaner—its gear-driven, reverse-revolving brush loosens imbedded dirt and picks up hairs, threads, ravelings, paper scraps, etc.

The BEE-VAC is sold at an extraordinarily low price by responsible dealers everywhere.

Let us send you descriptive literature and tell you where to see BEE-VAC demonstrated.



BIRTMAN ELECTRIC COMPANY
Manufacturers
648 West Lake Street
Chicago, U. S. A.

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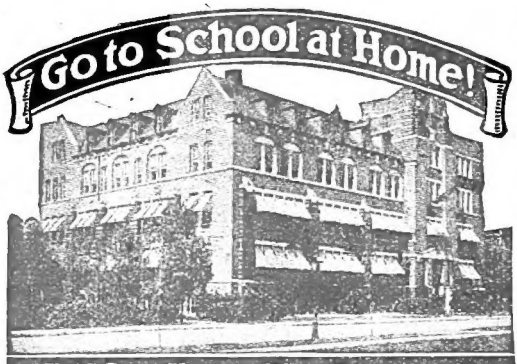

High School Course in Two Years!

You Want to Earn Big Money!

And you will not be satisfied unless you earn steady promotion. But are you prepared for the job ahead of you? Do you measure up to the standard that insures success? For a more responsible position a fairly good education is necessary. To write a sensible business letter, to prepare estimates, to figure cost and to compute interest, you must have a certain amount of preparation. All this you must be able to do before you will earn promotion.

Many business houses hire no men whose general knowledge is not equal to a high school course. Why? Because big business refuses to burden itself with men who are barred from promotion by the lack of elementary education.

Can You Qualify for a Better Position

We have a plan whereby you can. We can give you a complete but simplified high school course in two years, giving you all the essentials that form the foundation of practical business. It will prepare you to hold your own where competition is keen and exacting. Do not doubt your ability, but make up your mind to it and you will soon have the requirements that will bring you success and big money. YOU CAN DO IT.

Let us show you how to get on the road to success. It will not cost you a single working hour. We are so sure of being able to help you that we will cheerfully return to you, at the end of ten lessons, every cent you sent us if you are not absolutely satisfied. What fairer offer can we make you? Write today. It costs you nothing but a stamp.

American School of Correspondence
Dept. H-84 Chicago, U. S. A.

American School of Correspondence,
Dept. H-84, Chicago, Ill.

Explain how I can qualify for positions checked.

.....Architect. $5,000 to $15,000	.....Lawyer. $5,000 to $15,000
.....Building Contractor. $5,000 to $10,000	.....Mechanical Engineer. $4,000 to $10,000
.....Automobile Engineer. $4,000 to $10,000	.....Shop Superintendent. $3,000 to $7,000
.....Automobile Repairman. $2,500 to $4,000	.....Employment Manager. $4,000 to $10,000
.....Civil Engineer. $5,000 to $15,000	.....Steam Engineer. $2,000 to $4,000
.....Structural Engineer. $4,000 to $10,000	.....Foreman's Course, $2,000 to $4,000
.....Business Manager. $5,000 to $15,000	.....Photoplay Writer. $2,000 to $10,000
.....Certified Public Accountant $7,000 to $15,000	.....Sanitary Engineer. $2,000 to $5,000
.....Accountant and Auditor. $2,500 to $7,000	.....Telephone Engineer. $2,500 to $5,000
.....Draftsman and Designer. $2,500 to $4,000	.....Telegraph Engineer. $2,500 to $5,000
.....Electrical Engineer. $4,000 to $10,000	.....High School Graduate. In two years.
.....General Education. In one year.	.....Fire Insurance Expert. $3,000 to $10 000

Name..... Address.....

The Field of Dishonor

SHE had never seen a highwayman before. This one had on army officer's boots and the manners of a gentleman. She laughed and told him so. But it was serious business for him. He faced death, prison, disgrace.

It is a story so startling and curious, with its tangle of romance and adventure—with its daring, thrilling climax—that it could only be told by that maker of romance—

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

(First Uniform Edition)

Whether it be the blinding heat of an African desert—a lonesome island in the Pacific—or the deep mystery of a London fog—Davis always had a breathless story to tell. He knew that Romance was not dead. No man ever knew so many different kinds of people. No man ever visited so many strange lands or saw so many wars in so many different places. He was at the Boer War—he was in Cuba—he saw the Russo-Japanese War—he was in Mexico—he was in the Great War. More than ever before Americans love him. His heart flamed against cruelty and injustice—he typifies the spirit with which America went to war.

FREE *Gouverneur Morris* 4 Volumes

No more thoroughly American writer lives today than Gouverneur Morris. Brilliant men—vividly beautiful women—live in his pages. That is because he himself has lived for years among New York's richest, gayest, most fashionable set.

If you want to know the spirit of costly luxury in which certain well-known people live—their colorful adventures in passion and romance—then Gouverneur Morris is for you.

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Send me, all charges prepaid, complete set of Richard Harding Davis, in 12 volumes. Also send absolutely FREE the set of Gouverneur Morris, in 4 volumes. If these books are not satisfactory I will return both sets, within 10 days, at your expense. Otherwise, I will send you **$1.00** at once and **$2.00** a month for 13 months. For cash deduct 10%.

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QUICK SUCCESS
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I am a Graduate Electrical Engineer. I have the legal right to sign *E. E.* after my name. *E. E.* means Degree of Electrical Engineer and is awarded by Universities and Schools of Science only after years of study and research.

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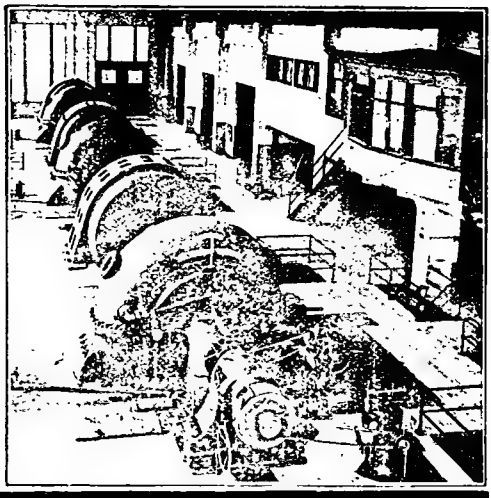

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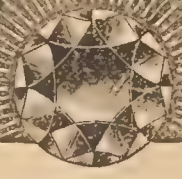

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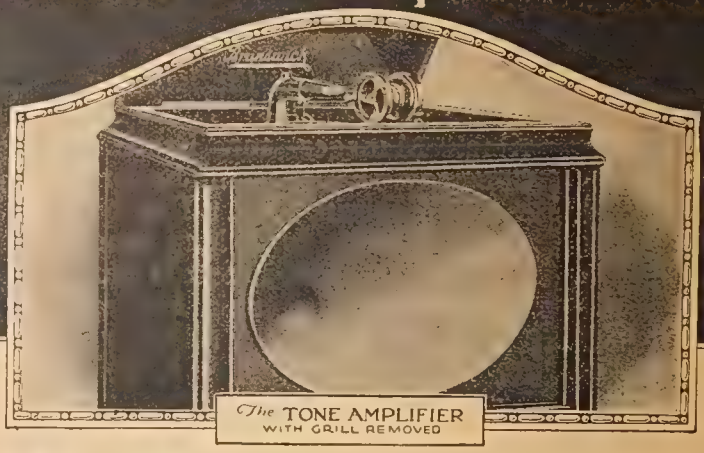

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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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RACEY DAWSON, cowboy, fights against a desperate gang, in the days when men shot first and explained afterward. "THE HEART OF THE RANGE," a five-part story, by William Patterson White, begins in the next issue.

WITH a deep-sea diving outfit in the master's cabin and an armed guard as supercargo the *Mary L.* puts out for a South Sea island where cannibals stand guard over a remnant of the German navy and a treasure of pearls lies hidden in the lagoon. "NO MAN'S ISLAND," by J. Allan Dunn, in the next issue. A complete novel.

Other stories in the next issue are mentioned on the last page of this one.

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Adventure

MID-DEC. 1920
VOL. XXVII
NO. VI

STORM ROVERS

A Complete Novel

by Gordon Young

Author of "Evidence," "Wild Blood," etc.

I

HONOLULU buzzingly gossiped about the ship with the viking name; for ships, like women in many other ways too, get themselves talked of if they misbehave.

Her runaway sailors, finding haven in one bar shanty or another, told of a madman that lived aft and owned the ship.

Her mate had been thrown bodily from the deck. He swam ashore; he had to swim or sink. Gorvhalsen, the owner, did not care what he did—what the mate did; or what he himself did, for that matter.

The mate's baggage and wages were sent after him. The American consul was hearing about it. The sailors, deep in gin, said what they had suffered. The consul would hear about that too.

The captain came off with his bag and baggage. He had been engaged to bring the *Heraldr* into Honolulu; there she was, and, roundly, he did not care what happened to her from then on. The owner, he said, was a queer animal; but the seamen had no proper grievance at all. As for the mate—there was a "woman" on board.

In a port where whalers flocked, their rough discipline brutally kept and taken by sailors, everybody, as a part of sea-life, complaining, stories needed to tell at least of murder to stir officials.

An officer's story was not so readily overlooked, yet the mate's was unsympathetically like complaining of ill luck with a woman. This woman, it was said, had screamed; and the owner, Gorvhalsen, some sort of a relative to her, had heard. He was a powerful brute.

The consul visited the *Heraldr*. He came back enthusiastic, for a distinguished scientist with wife and freinds was at Honolulu.

The next day they came ashore as his guests.

II

A BEACH-COMBER known as McGuire was usually among the idlers around the boat-landing, with wreath-makers, fruit-venders, sailors waiting for boats, other loafers of one kind and another and small

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naked youngsters who came out of the water from time to time and sprawled on the warm sand.

A soothing drowsy laziness like the restful weariness of work well done filled the days, put even the more civilized men into long cane chairs with tall glasses and siphons near by. In the evening they would stir about leisurely, with cigars aglow and *leis* on their necks, talk of home, shipments, sugar in the valleys, coffee in the uplands—and be bumped from the path by the whirling flash of some brown-bodied boy grasping at a happily excited girl, coming out of the dark breathless in love-drunken play and vanishing with a blur of soft footfalls into shadows.

McGuire was known as a happy-go-lucky beach-comber, a harmless sort of fellow, worthless. The tedium of existence seemed just about all that he could stagger through the world with unless he happened to get into the water. He was a good swimmer.

Oddly enough McGuire had innocent blue eyes somewhat obscured by drooping lids. The innocent light, appealing as sadness, was unconvincing to those who knew him or of him.

Whatever attractiveness he had was in his personality, not in his appearance. The ugliness was pronounced, unescapable on sight, but hardly remembered. The smile was remembered and the words, often unexpected as epigrams. He had a sun-burned freckle-splattered face, a wide mouth and badly formed long nose.

He would talk freely of anything to anybody and spoke the native language like a Kanaka. His voice was gentle, slow, disarmingly amiable; but it was the height of unwisdom to believe anything that he said. In that regard he did not differ greatly from the average beach-comber.

A long, lean, silent old man by the name of Brundage was his friend. Brundage was thought to have money. For a time he had tried to buy a small schooner, then suddenly decided to buy nothing and took to the backless chair on the porch of a sailors' boarding-house in Market Street. McGuire lived with him.

After the *Heraldr* arrived, McGuire began loafing by the landing. He would lie motionless in the shade, his brick-red head on a tattooed arm, and watch the ship sleepily; with patience.

Near him the flower-girls chattered, laughing, eating, teasing. When a drunken sailor came by like an unlovely reveler, his pawing hands would be beaten away amid shrill words. They would laugh, unangered, as he staggered off, covered with flowers thrown at him. Such fellows were exceedingly popular with the flower-girls, especially a sailor like McGuire; for in that life of play and sunshine they had come to be a part of the daily fun.

III

AS THE boat approached the landing with the consul's guests McGuire began from afar to guess at the strange faces.

Among them was the familiar face of Matt Ward, the new captain of the *Heraldr*—a fellow with a large waistline and an overhanging mustache with tobacco-stained fringe. He was hard-spoken and glowered at whomever he talked to. With his own hands he had been gathering a crew for the *Heraldr* even before she came, and he seemed to want all of the scoundrels and roughs in sight. A lot of them, lured by the hint of trouble and treasure, were eager to sign on.

Some weeks before, Ward had appeared at Honolulu and began making inquiries about two fellows whom nobody knew.

He had fallen in with McGuire, and the talk drifted around to "Hurricane Williams," the notorious "pirate" who had lately made off with a big iron bark and, so rumor said, her treasure-chest held a half-million pounds sterling, in gold.

Ward did not say why he wanted a deck full of rough fighting men. Like a discreet treasure-hunter he asked questions and told nothing, but maintained an air of mystery and gave vague hints. They were enough for McGuire. And after that Brundage took to his backless chair and quit looking for a schooner.

The consul, all in white, his red freshly shaven face aglow, and swinging a gold-headed cane, strolled toward the landing to wait for his guest.

He stopped by the wreath-makers—very pretty girls, some of them, in their long one-piece loose gowns of white muslin and colored calico. While *leis* were placed about his neck and hat crown he talked to them, or thought that he did, in the Kanaka tongue; but he had no sooner walked away than they turned on McGuire, demanding to know of him what the consul had tried to say.

"Ever'thing that is true", he answered carelessly. "You are lazy girls who ought to be bending in taro patches—that you ought to send your pretty sisters to the beach so strangers won't be disappointed."

They jeered him stormily. The consul was a gallant man. They knew that. McGuire was the father of all untruth. They knew that, too.

Three women were in the approaching boat, and McGuire recognized far off the one of whom the runaway sailors talked so much.

"I tell uh," a gin-laden fellow had said, his head unsteadily bobbing while a gestural arm feebly wandered about, "I tell uh she's beau-beau-t'ful—like a show-girl."

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His ill-stocked brain had no memories to draw on for comparison but the tawdry tinseled wastrel women of shows in drinking-places along port water-fronts.

Jeanne Vaughn—he knew her name—was beautiful in the surprizing, bizarre way of remote and unattainable women. He had seen her on deck when he was at the wheel, had been close to her and had been left with the haunting shadow of her in his brain.

"She's got red hair—not like yourn. An' jew'lry. The mate—he put 'is hand on 'er. That black devil throwed him over. Mos' beaut'ful like a show-girl."

The boat curved broadside to the landing-steps where the consul stood hatless and bowing.

Native girls and loafers pressed respectfully about the party.

Gorvhalsen, huge, black-bearded, almost as awkward as an animal unused to its hind legs, fascinated the water-front idlers.

"He ought to live in a tree," McGuire muttered to a native girl in front of him.

She turned alertly. Her dark face, overhung with a coronal of white blossoms, was puzzled but eager.

"You never saw a gorilla. If you had, Tilua, you'd pick up your skirts now an' run."

She knew that McGuire talked much nonsense, so she smiled understandingly and looked again, not at Gorvhalsen but at the flame-woman, the wonderful creature with red hair.

Jeanne Vaughn was without a head-covering other than the purple parasol that matched her silken waist and stockings. Her hair was an auroral glory, shortened, bushily curling, bright. It flared, startling, unreal, like the head-dress of a Fijian. Her dark eyes were alert, watchful, as if to see who was not admiring her.

"Poor moths," said McGuire.

He had been drinking before he got to the boarding-house that night and found Brundage like a piece of stonework with animated eyes, sitting on his backless chair, feet on the railing. He was a grim old man, stern, erect, silent, and he hated women, all of them.

"——beautiful. You'd like her, Jake. 'Flame-woman,' Tilua calls her. Must have moths, those women. You'd be a fine gray old moth. I'd sit a long time to see you flutter."

McGuire flapped his long thin arms up and down in pantomime. Brundage smoked on, his eyes looking away into the darkness.

"Bold as a woman who doesn't know she isn't pretty. Nothin' bolder, Jake. Always at the masthead—these danger-women. Always on the watch. Wantin' some man to make 'em love him.

"There's your chance. Aye, twenty years ago when your blood was warm. No—Too soon. Forty years ago. You were human forty years ago, weren't you? I doubt it.

"She thinks she's full o' life, too. She's empty. That's the trouble. Her eagerness is hunger—for moths. She flamed up on the *Heraldr's* poop because there were some half-shaped devils that looked like men in the fo'c's'le. Always on the lookout, Jake, to stir men up. All red an' purple—like fire an' bruises. One o' these days her soul'll go up to ——, an' —— 'll say ——"

Brundage growled. The ineffable name on McGuire's lips made him uneasy. It was the only thing under heaven that could stir him from his remote, stony aspect; but McGuire's drunken tongue was at times enough to disquiet an atheist. Brundage was nothing so philosophical as an atheist. He was an old tough-bodied man, full of crime and no repentance, though he thought that any man might rest a little easier if a prayer was said at his grave's edge.

IV

McGUIRE had closely watched everybody in the party.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen was tall, poised and unexpectedly refined for the mate of an anthropoid.

With her was a young boy and an even younger girl, not more than sixteen or seventeen. The boy had the friendliness of a lanky ill-fed pup that has hopefully attached himself to strangers. The shoulders were prematurely rounded with the marked curvature that books put on their victims. His curly blond hair did not belong above the pale thin face that needed only a few wrinkles to look aged. His clothes did not fit.

His sister—there could be no doubt that she was his sister—had a wide-eyed trustfulness and wonder in her eyes. She was a blonde little thing, not yet in bloom; hipless and breastless. In the midst of dark robust maidens who bloomed rapidly she seemed pathetically immature, faded if not blighted; and as yet she was unconscious of the graces woman is supposed to have. She was learning geography, but was unaware of men—except as races.

A man of judgment, the consul for instance, would have seen in Mrs. Gorvhalsen's niece only a little schoolgirl, unwisely innocent but protectively unattractive. McGuire guessed that if she did not believe in giants and dragons, surely she had faith in pots of gold where rainbows end, princes in disguise, and probably kept a diary.

Matt Ward gripped a cigar at the corner of his mouth, firmly, almost savagely, as though letting the world know he could hold men as he held that cigar. McGuire thought that he would have a fine time with his bold sea-dog manner if he ever got in the way of the great black brainy animal that owned the ship.

One of the native girls threw a wreath about

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the boy's neck. He jumped guiltily, then thanked her as soberly as he had ever thanked any of his sister's convent friends for a nosegay.

The flower-girls, giggling, laughing, acting shy but being bold, adorned the party.

The heaviest shower fell about the neck of Gorvhalsen, who was like some great muscular Silenus being decked for a drunken feast. He stooped submissively while flower-chains were put on his neck.

His hat had been snatched away and Tilua was swiftly fastening a *leis* on it. Bare-headed, his thick dark hair falling to his ears, he stood awkwardly, powerful, amiable.

A calicoed girl with sudden boldness began to weave red flowers into the black wavy beard that overflowed his breast.

From hat-crown to waist he was festooned. He straightened toweringly; then with a gesture almost like that of capture his hand reached out and closed on the arm of a girl.

She pulled back, jerking as hard as she could and laughing nervously. Her embarrassment was real. He was more than a strange man; he was a strange kind of man. Slowly he drew her toward him. She struggled, begging and laughing together.

His hand slipped down along her arm and held her wrist, then pressed money into her fingers. Some change slipped through; and at once, like imps exploded into flight, little black bare-bodied boys darted scramblingly into the sandy dust.

The girl whirled away. Others pressed toward him with eager fluttering and happy cries: Gorvhalsen was emptying his pockets into their hands, sometimes tossing the coins, sometimes holding his hand closed so they must pry and pull at his fingers.

Then he strode off, laughing deep, swaying, dripping petals at every step.

McGuire caught the sea-sickly looking youth straggling behind the party. He would turn aside at each bush to poke it with his nose.

"See those girls?" McGuire asked. "Used to put women to death for that."

Young Corydon was startled both by the stranger's approach and words. All that he could see were two fat women in the shade munching bananas, and he sidled off distrustfully.

"That's right," McGuire affirmed.

"You know I'm just a stranger."

"Sure I know it. Thought you'd like to learn some things. Ask the consul. 'F you come ashore some time I'll take you round. Ask the consul about the bananas. See this tree? Candle-nut tree. Grows candles an'——"

But his sister called to him, and Corydon hurried off.

He did ask the consul about the bananas. He asked with exceeding timidity, feeling a little foolish as one does when suspicious of a question's good sense; then he felt surprize and some gratitude toward McGuire. In the heathen days women were put to death for eating bananas—and for eating many other things that men particularly liked.

V

IN A few days McGuire had a devoted admirer, and scarcely knew what to do with him. Young Corydon rapidly became at ease with the oddest companion that the world's rag-bag could have furnished, and for a long time believed that McGuire was a real friend of his own kind.

He had never heard of beach-combers, the outcasts from even tropic tolerance, who live—that is about all that can be said. By some satanic miracle, they live and do not die off.

Day after day Corydon came ashore, looking for and finding him. McGuire was puzzled at first, then liked the boy—he was so blazingly innocent and incurious. He did not drink—or anything. He did not want to see a hula-hula. He wanted to see landmarks and have McGuire tell their legends. McGuire could imagine legends as fast as he could talk—good lively ones, too.

One morning McGuire was drowsily listening to native gossips when Corydon touched his shoulder, saying—

"I brought my sister to go with us today."

The answer came in a language that Corydon had the luck not to understand; and McGuire, quite awakened, was looking at the girl. Slight, immature, alone as though lost, she stood some fifty yards away, watching him with wide curious eyes. She held a little pasteboard box.

"She has brought lunch for us," Corydon said.

"She can't go. It won't do. —— *no!*"

The boy was stubborn. He wanted her to go. He said—

"And I've told her of you, how you know everything!"

If she had been a woman, McGuire would not have cared. He was hardened enough for that. Jeanne Vaughn, for instance. He would not have minded how much embarrassment, confusion, anger, came upon her at learning she had spent the day with a beach-comber. But a girl-child— No!

And he could not explain to her that white women did not speak to him. He was not the type of sinner, anyhow, to redeem himself by self-depreciation. It would have been too much like claiming virtue.

There she stood, like a colorless little straggler in browns and grays, wistfully expectant. Her light hair strayed inquisitively from under her stiff straw hat that was held by an elastic under the chin. The cut of her thin gray blouse gave

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her shoulders a rounded effect, much like her brother's curvature. The brown skirt fell formlessly against her legs. There was a simple, uninteresting bud-like beauty in her face—a very innocent and unthrilling face, devoid of the stimulation that awakens men suddenly, stirring the worst or the best in them. She was a sober little mortal and all eager to know about the world. Her faith in McGuire was great, rooted in the confidences and admiration communicated by her brother.

McGuire abruptly decided that it wouldn't greatly hurt anybody if she had at least one day of her youth to remember in her old age. The three of them got into a cab and drove rapidly over the smooth streets, out through the green and white town, into the valley.

As suddenly as if by the raising of a foliage curtain they came into a little clearing where three or four houses stood, looking like shaggy hayricks with doorways in the end. Chickens scattered from under the pony's feet. A dog barked half-welcomingly from a doorway, then stretched himself stiffly and came forward with much tail-wagging and head-bobbing. He knew McGuire, but those funny strangers would have to be nosed and looked over.

A naked baby, its full little brown stomach advanced like an alderman's and a small mouth stretched over the end of a sugar cane, stared stolidly.

Voices were heard, faces peered out. Around the houses came four or five nearly naked boys of all the small sizes. Knowing that strangers had come, the girls paused to slip hastily into their loose gowns, then bounded out with brown legs flashing under white muslin.

They pawed and bantered McGuire, but fell upon Eve as though to tear her to pieces out of delight in having her for a guest. Her little half-frozen soul was startled. The unsightly hat was whisked from her feebly groping hands, and out of their own hair they took wreaths and flowers for her blonde head.

In the whole of her life she had never known more of a welcome than the perfunctory embrace and dull flat kiss of a relative. Now she was just about lifted and carried to where one of the youngsters struggled with a rolled mat, brought through the doorway for the stranger guests.

A matronly woman, big, fat, came up slowly, smiling at McGuire. Her loose dress was spotted, her big feet were bare; but somehow she had dignity, even grace.

McGuire, after expressing his unconvincing opinion of her daughters, nieces, and all the youthful maiden connection she had, spoke of his friends.

The baby waddled importantly across to the mat, wedged between the girls and, advancing into the midst of the circle, collapsed and regarded Eve with dignified appraisement. She reached out coaxingly. But it was beneath him to yield to the arms of a strange woman.

McGuire was saying: "— from a great cold country where people freeze in the cradle. Never get warm, some of 'em, till they die—then they roast."

The baby, having passed judgment, thrust out its sugar stick, offering to share its wordly goods. Eve leaned forward and opened her mouth; and as the sticky baby hand came against her face, something warm and overpowering seemed to burst inside of her breast. With a gesture convulsively eager she snatched the baby into her arms.

That was no way to treat a fellow. He kicked and squirmed, wriggled loose, got out from among the girls and with waddling, pompous steps approached McGuire.

"—taught from babyhood to believe they'll go to a warm island—like this—somewhere up there, if they're good an' not too happy——"

Lest there should be a trace of hunger in the guests, a wooden calabash half as big as a wagon-wheel, heaped with bananas, mangos, papayas, blue grapes and oranges, was placed before Eve and Corydon. A beflowered cupbearer broke into and offered cool green cocoanuts.

"—their bare feet have never known the touch of the naked earth. They get their flowers from bottles, one drop at a time——"

VI

THAT night two weary, bedraggled young people, one with her stiff hat askew and the other with his ears flattened by the soiled, over-sized helmet, trailed tired feet toward the landing. Their faces were alight with inner contentment and their arms were loaded with boughs. They were covered with dust and flowers. Their clothes were ruined. Every muscle ached in astonished anger. But the boy and girl were happy. They looked at each other again and again, too worn out to speak; but reassuring glances declared each to the other that it had been a day of days.

A weary confusion of pleasant impressions bore upon Eve. She was past trying to think, and knew only that she had never been so tired and had so many delights. There was warmth of satisfaction in the very exhaustion.

All day they had climbed about, finding fruit and flowers, eating, sniffing, laughing, racing.

At a deep clear pool the boys had been sent away. The brown girls, dropping their dresses with swift disrobing-gestures, flashed into the water.

Eve removed her shoes and stockings and

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for the first time her pale little bleached feet and ankles felt anything like the pagan caress of earth, sun and hillside water.

The floor of the pool was enameled with smooth stones. Like water-girls of classic fables the Hawaiians danced and glided, laughed and splashed.

Twitches of vague uneasiness came to her. It seemed wrong to be bathing unclothed in the sunlight, with only leafy beflowered screens about; but she had been comforted by the thought that it must be all right, for McGuire had readily gone away with the boys. She never doubted that he would have disapproved had it really been wrong.

McGuire was totally beyond her experience and imagination. His slow lazy good-humored manner fascinated her; but when he took to words she was thrilled. He talked so effortlessly and rounded everything like a story-teller, and he seemed to know all things and understand them.

She was happily unconscious of his disregard for the truth in the legends and folk-lore. That would have troubled her. She would have preferred the strict truth and enjoyed it less, and no doubt she would still have admired him too; but growing wonderment would not have touched and filled her until the man himself was distorted almost heroically.

He returned to them in the dusk with two Kanakas following. The natives ran a boat off the sand and shot alongside the steps.

McGuire helped her into it, making sure that she had every twig that bore a precious blossom. Her little fingers were not too weary to be greedy for all the floral loot.

Corydon, of course, almost fell into the water getting seated. His feet and hands were always in his way. He tried to tell McGuire what a splendid day they had spent.

Eve, somehow, as women can, put nearly all that she felt into a simple good-by. She waved at him in the darkness.

His answering smile was obscured in the thickening twilight; and it was just as well. It was a weary, half-mocking smile, perhaps self-mocking.

They never saw him again on shore.

The consul, who had come to the *Heraldr* for dinner, heard about the day from the exhausted boy and girl. He managed to restrain himself until he had Mrs. Gorvhalsen's ears alone with his shocked voice.

"That McGuire——"

Mrs. Gorvhalsen was not excitable. She said nothing at all to Eve, but took pains to see that she did not again go wandering away with a stray beach-comber. Somehow Corydon also found his aunt making arrangements that kept him from getting on shore by himself.

VII

MATT WARD called himself a devil-tamer, and got together a crew unenvied by any captain in port.

McGuire came out on the eve of sailing with two boat-loads of Ward's devils, as yet untamed. They were a riffraff of quarreling, singing fellows, many ragged, some hungry—but none sober.

They were mostly bearded; many had small loops of gold in their ears, and one piratical Frenchman with a red cloth bound over his forehead wore earrings that tinkled when he moved. There was a crucifix about his neck.

Shirts of all the bright and dirty colors were among them, with a glow of yellow silk on the black body of a big American negro. Trousers were of canvas and dungarees, brown, blue and white. Knives, some of them very long, were on their hips, with lanyards through the rings.

One bearded fellow crouched down in the boat as though with a broken body. Men tossed fragments of flower-chains at him, and drunken laughter mocked him for being drunk. An enfeebled old fellow—the sailmaker—patiently struck sulfur matches against the wet gunnel, his pipe between his teeth. A burly American prize-fighter insisted that he was champ*een* and that his name was Clobb. A Spaniard rattled in his soft tongue to a dozing Swede. Two bearded old whalers sat together and sang wailingly of a sailor's sad life.

They had the impudence of chosen men, and bawled cheers at the *Heraldr's* poop where Jeanne Vaughn and Eve stood among three or four figures.

Two mates bent above the accommodation ladder, expecting trouble. A fellow with a girth like a barrel's stood at the foot of the ladder to take a hand in quieting down the raffle. He was the boatswain.

The mates cursed stormily as the men with a rush, almost capsizing, crowded toward the ladder, clustering up unsteadily, their feet less sure than their hands. They clutched the man-ropes and stumbled.

The one wholly drunk man was dragged on board with his head hanging from a neck as limp as if broken. He was dropped like a sack of unneeded ballast. Men stumbled over and stepped on him.

They were kicked, dragged, shunted, cursed forward, where they swarmed about the forecastle like upturned ants. They tumbled about, unable to decide where to go or what to do, roaring, singing, fighting, snoring, swearing, settling on hatches and in scuppers, getting in their own way, staggering if their feet moved.

They filled the deck-house and dungeon-like quarters in the forecastle, overflowing all about the deck. It was impossible to call a muster. They would not have answered Gabriel himself. The boatswain, a big Britisher, got orders

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to keep the crew piped down. The women aft were being made uneasy. Gorvhalsen and Matt Ward were not yet on board.

Most of the crew had been swept up from the beach, pulled out of adobe shacks and gin-shops around the fish-market. Among them were men who had been shipwrecked, some on coral, some on ice; a few real sailormen who had bucked the westward wind around the Horn; fellows who had hunted whales from the Behring to the Tuscarora, rioted in the bazaars of Singapore.

They were superstitious and blasphemous, the jetsam of a tropic port, driftings from the seas of all the world: Portuguese, a Frenchman, three Kanakas who considered McGuire as one of themselves, a Swedish carpenter, two Chinese cooks, a Jap boy, a Chilian or two, a California miner, British deserters who knew many ballads and believed a scratch on the mizzen would raise a wind.

Thirty-one men before the mast. Matt Ward *was* looking for trouble.

VIII

STRANGE tales they told one to another, with fierce oaths casually used, of fights and sights and drunken nights.

A fellow named Smith, an old-timer in the South Seas, babbled of having seen the *Mariana*, the iron bark stolen by the pirate, "Hurricane" Williams, when she put into Havannah Harbor.

Brundage, sleepless and aloof, sat quietly watching Smith and listening to the sons of the men who had built Babel's tower.

Men were called liars who said that the girls in the Tunis bazaars wore gaily colored breastclothes and tight creamy trousers; but every yarn of a spectral craft was taken with the solemn nod of approval.

They yarned, jabbered, fought and sang.

Shortly before dark the boatswain came forward with a belaying-pin to pipe down a noisy quartet draped about the topgallant forecastle windlass and yelling a sad song of a faithless shore-girl.

It was a good fight. Then the burly boatswain, aglow with the spirit of battle, yelled louder than they had sung—

"Now 'f hany more o' hu livelies wants a bashed 'ead, just hu sing hout!"

He was answered with jeers and groans from all sides. He bounded down the ladder, tramping and peering about, his bull neck outthrust, and when he caught sight of a fellow's open mouth he jumped for him. Somebody with a piece of wood in hand hit the boatswain from behind. He fell and lay for many minutes like a drunken man.

McGuire's lazy mild manner was undisturbed. He climbed on top of the deck-house and smoked placidly. Niggerhead tobacco made him dizzy. Emptied gin-bottles had a like effect; but he would admit it less willingly. He smoked and meditated. The talk of that fellow who had seen the iron bark in Havannah Harbor interested him.

Stores were to be broken out and the boatswain with a dirty-colored cloth about his aching head came in the darkness, seeking the least drunken, and found McGuire's extended feet.

On the way toward the lazarette McGuire passed young Corydon. The boy's face had a worried, strained look. Holding on to the rail at the break of the poop, he was staring forward, shocked, a little frightened.

"My aunt has a nervous headache. And she hears them. Would it do any good to tell them, do you think? She has a headache."

McGuire said not unkindly that it would depend on the size of the club with which they were told; and he had no time to talk further, as the irritated boatswain bawled for him to move lively.

McGuire slowed into a saunter, passed the cabin skylight. Peering down he saw the first mate, sitting at the table and gazing steadily toward Jeanne Vaughn, radiant and fluffy. She was talking with him.

IX

THE crew almost at once hated Gorvhalsen and were afraid of him. He was, they said, the devil himself and crazy. Had he been a man of the sea, they would have cursed him and sworn by him; but he was a landsman, so they cursed him only.

From the first day at sea Corydon came seeking McGuire in the dog watches and they talked together. Corydon had an almost superstitious dread that something fearful would happen. It was because of Gorvhalsen.

"You think he's a Jonah," said McGuire, understanding.

Gorvhalsen called himself a Black Dane, and though a scholarly man with many scientific books to his name, he was really a big barbarian and got himself thought a lunatic by the crew. The deserters at Honolulu, who brought the ship in, had sworn they wouldn't stay another twenty-four hours on the *Heraldr*; not if they hanged for it. That fellow—why, blast him; he was likely to scuttle the ship for the fun of seeing if they could swim.

He was always trampling about, singing, exercising, beating a sack of sand, crawling out on the crossjack boom—playing with his life. Once he dropped a hawser over the taffrail and slid down, enjoying the tow. A shark nearly got him. He came scrambling up. Naked and hairy as a beast, he stood, dripping and shouting down at the vanished fish, cursing in loud good-natured enmity. All that day, restlessly, unable to stay quiet in any place for

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more than a few minutes, he fished around the ship for sharks. He caught nothing.

Then Gorvhalsen went into the forecastle, carrying some pieces of padded leather. Matt Ward had protested against his going, against mingling with the crew, but he went and, throwing the gloves down, invited any man there to pick them up.

The big negro, called Sam-O, no matter what his name, poked them with a bare foot and pretended not to know what they were.

The boatswain urged this fellow and that to slip them on and have a go. He was sarcastically invited to honor himself by the wearing of them, but declined.

Clobb, the "champeen," swaggered up with a restrained wise air on his broad face. He examined them critically, and urged by a dozen shipmates, put on the gloves.

Their feet were hardly braced before Gorvhalsen whipped a long arm across his shoulder and Clobb went down. He came up angered, rushed powerfully and went down again.

Gorvhalsen laughed derisively; contemptuous, like a half-god or a devil.

Clobb came back, amazed, furious, terrible. His blows were blocked deftly, his face beaten; but his rushes were strong.

Gorvhalsen went down, deliberately tripped by one of the crew. For a half-hour he was unconscious. He knew that he had been tripped. As he fell he had seen by whom, but at the moment of falling he had not been able to help himself. The ringbolt which his head struck delayed justice for a time; but he nearly killed the man who had tripped him. He beat the fellow, a man half his size, with bare fists in the midst of the crew; then went toward the cabin, whistling.

The forecastle muttered. Somebody would stick a knife in him—yet. Or break an ax-blade over his head. Threats ran bitterly from mouth to mouth.

Had Gorvhalsen beaten them, kicked them, hazed them, murdered them, to the thunder of seamanly orders, much of the dangerous discontent in their feelings would have been lost; but he was not a seaman. He had books read aloud to him on the poop, and otherwise acted crazily.

A little fellow, scrawny and shrill of voice, who was called "Dicer" because he was always rattling his leather box under the noses of men, urging them to gamble, said vicious things to the crew.

Another fellow, ugly and squat with broken black teeth, also talked much—

"—beach this old hooker—brandy an'——"

The significant words fell strikingly out of muffled sentences; and what he indicated by a thumb's jerk over his shoulder was more significant than what he said. The three women were under the awning.

McGuire listened. He knew there was a lot of human powder in the forecastle, but it was rather early for even a whisper of that kind though already he had heard the *Heraldr* cursed, Jeanne Vaughn brutally appraised; the Chinks in the galley who tainted the food with the unmistakable tang of the Orient kitchen pots, blasted with oath on oath. He doubted if Jeanne Vaughn would flaunt herself so wilfully if she knew what lightly slept in forecastle men.

X

THEN one midnight Matt Ward's roared order to throw a man into chains was knocked up. The captain was carelessly overridden by the lumbering black giant of a Dane who sent brandy forward with his compliments to the man.

Ward was not of the mettle to clash on Gorvhalsen; and he washed down his humiliation with hot liquors.

From then on the crew despised him, and he was enough of a sailor to know it. He had become purely a sailing-master, and no captain.

It had come about that a heavy hand tapped McGuire's shoulder, arousing him from lazy meditation. He turned and looked into the face of the old-timer, Smith.

"Ain't I seen you afore?" Smith demanded. His attitude was accusing.

"Me? Depends on where you've been. I don't wear a magic cap, you know. Nor I'm not a ghost—yet."

"I was in Havannah Harbor——"

"Oh yes. Cuba. I've never been to Cuba."

"Naw. Havannah Harbor—Efate—an'——"

"Where's that?" McGuire asked, eager to learn.

"New Hebrides. An'——"

"Oh, down there." He nodded, enlightened, but no longer appeared interested.

"An' I was there when that bark, the *Mariana* put in."

"*Mariana?* Yes—Yes—I've heard o' her, I think."

"Heard ——! You're that same red-head off her, sure's the devil's alive," Smith blurted.

McGuire listened, smiling, untroubled, hardly interested, as Smith went on to explain that the fellow who came ashore off her at Havannah bore a very suspicious resemblance to "your own red-headed self."

"I'll go you," said McGuire quickly, tapping him on the shoulder. "You turn me up as a pirate, get the reward an' we'll split. Anything for money. How's that, Smith?"

It was very nearly too much for him. He had no mental equipment for handling such a remark. He had expected the quick angry denial of guilt or the shiver and startled expression of inadvertent confession. Smith had

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been brooding thoughtfully for several days over McGuire's red-headed lankiness; but this evasion was almost too subtle to be recognized as evasion at all.

"By thunder, you look him!" said Smith.

"By thunder," McGuire mimicked, "You can bet he's proud o' that—or ought 'o be!"

"You know what happened," Smith went on, telling over what he had told to grouped sailors again and again. "We're six o' us white men ashore. Traders an' a mish'nary an' me. We wonder what a ship like her 's doin' blackbirdin', for only nigger-catchers ever come there. Then we could see she was bein' beached to fix a leak an' thinks no more about it, as any ship has to hit the beach when she's got a hole in 'er. But the *Betty Rand*, blackbird schooner comes in. That pirate boards the *Betty* an' makes 'er chop her two sticks down—both masts!"

"Red-head?" McGuire asked, interested.

"Naw! Red-head? Naw! Hurricane Williams hisself. We guessed right away that she was the *Mariana*, the stole bark. He didn't want the *Betty* to do any guessin' either—to get out an' say as how she's seen a big iron bark. We heard afterward as how she'd been chased by a gunboat. An' I believe you are that feller what was with him! Ain't you? You come ashore an' them cannibals there was like pups —jus' pawin' an' followin' you. Ain't you?"

"No-oo-o," said McGuire lazily, leaning against the rail, an empty pipe in one hand, the other requestfully extended toward Smith. "No-o—no. Couldn't have been anybody that looked like me. No cannibals ever glad to see me—I'm too skinny. How's it for a bit of a smoke?"

Smith pushed aside the requestful hand.

"Say, I think you *are* that feller. Now ain't you?"

He peered hard, unfriendly, trying to force a confession.

McGuire sucked smilingly at the empty pipe as he drew a nubbin of tobacco from his own pocket and began crumbling it in the palm of his hand.

Smith laid hold of his shoulder, gripping hard—

"Say, *ain't* you?"

McGuire poked tobacco into his pipe-bowl. Nothing else interested him.

"Ain't you? ——it, ain't you that feller?"

McGuire looked up, amused, and said unconvincingly—

"Yes, of course."

Smith did not know what to make of that. He turned loose of the shoulder and hesitatingly eyed McGuire. The play of words and manner were baffling. He walked off thoughtfully.

Smith himself knew prison fare and the chill of the barber's clippers on the skin of his head, the weight of seven links to the ankle. He was a runaway convict. The old "lags" who might recognize him were dying off rapidly, but the fear of being caught was never far from him.

After a long meditative hour he decided to go aft on the morrow and have a word with Captain Ward. If Ward, as some thought, was out to find the *Mariana*, he would be interested. Anyway, there was the chance of a good thousand pounds and the gallows for the red-head; for though Smith had seen the fellow at Havannah Harbor only from a distance, he was sure that red-head and this McGuire were the same.

BUT that evening in the forecastle deck-house, with pannikin against the steaming kid, Smith reached for a hunk of meat, stabbing it with a sheath-knife, and his arm was struck up.

"Keep your dirty hands out o' that!" he was told in a coldly insulting tone.

It isn't the words that make a fight, but the tone.

Smith lifted a snarling face. His fist, fanged with a long tooth of metal, was at his left shoulder as he slipped menacingly from the edge of the bunk.

Men in the close quarters pressed toward corners and the doorway to be clear of the fight.

Though it was still day outside, the shadowing spread of canvas had increased the deck-house gloom, and a lantern threw off a dirty yellow glow. Brandage, his lean face outlined against the glow, looked down evilly.

Smith cursed him. The human animal, not less than the brute, must snarl and fight at the least hint of an offer if he would hold his place among the pack; and though men fight to the death for life, they throw their lives like dice at the flicker of an insult.

"Botany Bay canary!" said Brundage slowly, contemptuously.

He stood erect, tall, rather old but tough like a tree not yet weakened inside.

"What's that? What's that?" Smith cried with rising pitch of menace.

Years of freedom can not often hide the mark of the hulks from one who has himself been an old "lag."

"I've marked you," Brundage went on. "Your leg's got the swing o' iron jewelry, and by the cut o' your jib I'd say you were jerran of a joey!"—afraid of a government officer.

Had Smith been cooler of head he might have retorted with like insult. Slang of the hulks was in itself incriminating. But he had lately revisited prison ships in memory, and fear boiled within him.

There was no way out of the quarrel except such as a knife would cut. Had he been given a choice, Smith would have taken no other way. The unfriendly man who had his secret—he did

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not pause to think that Brundage had merely made a guess—had lost the right to live.

Smith was at him with an oath and a flourish. Brundage, with a backward sweep of his left hand to clear onlookers, thrust out an arm and knife in a fending blow.

Voices cried protest. The glint of loosened steel makes a man's nerves rattle together, and in the sudden push to stand clear as blows flashed, the sailors jostled and shoved the fighters. The quarters were too close for men who, as much as they wanted to see the knife-play, dreaded the gleam of blades that might bite into them. A knife that wants blood has a wide mouth.

The mess-kid was overturned. Some slipped to their knees with their feet in the mess and scrambled wildly about the legs of Brundage and Smith. There was headlong flopping into bunks, kicking and cursing. Men shouted for the fighters to go on to the forecastle deck.

Steel clicked, edge to edge. They each had a left hand clinched to a bunk's edge to steady their feet, and their brows came down over narrowed eyes agleam and deadly. Knives darted strikingly, with Smith the more ferocious, Brundage the cooler. He guarded like a fencer.

Old Tom, one of the Yankee whalers, shouted shrilly from his bunk; then he watchfully lashed out with booted feet, knocked Smith backward, and jumping up, faced Brundage.

The voice of Old Tom was high and hard. He was no peacemaker. If they wanted to fight, there was the forecastle deck. They could go there an' be mince-meat, for all he cared. But blast 'em for spoilin' the supper of honest men. There was little enough to eat—might the devil take them Chinks anyhow.

"Will you take it in the moonlight?"

Brundage asked it, looking past Old Tom.

"I'll that—'r now!" Smith shouted with bitter words.

SAILORS muttered wonderingly and slipped away to spread the news and talk of it freely among themselves. They knew that Brundage was forcing the quarrel and could not imagine why. But never yet were men unthrilled by the thought that other men might die in a fight they could watch, unendangered.

The moon lifted herself around two bells, nine o'clock. She came up like a great plate of white-hot metal with a part of the rim melted away and rose rapidly into the twinkling sky.

The mate's watch had taken the deck at eight o'clock. Brundage and Smith were in it.

There was clustering of men in the dark splotches of sail shadows and low talk of what was coming. Word had got about. The starboard watch, instead of turning in and getting a little sleep, waited restively.

Bets were made on which man would live. The little gambler, Dicer, plunged with much of the winnings from his crooked dice to put blankets, shirts, knives and things, all on Smith. He was a thin-nosed, scrawny, rat-like fellow, and jeered and bullied men who had nothing to bet. McGuire silenced him.

"I'll bet two fingers off my right hand 'gainst the little one off your left," said McGuire carelessly, but with an arresting sincerity.

Dicer eyed him questioningly.

"An' we'll appoint Clobb an' Sam-O to collect from the loser. How's that, Dicer?"

Men taunted Dicer. Always he wanted to gamble. Here was a chance. The big negro grinned cruelly. Clobb smote McGuire's back approvingly.

"W'at t'——I want wit' your dirty fingers!" Dicer cried.

"All I got." McGuire held out an empty hand. "You want 'o bet. I'm accommodatin'. Always oblige a friend like you, Dicer."

"You go t' the ——. Hi 'm no idjit!" he answered, studiously inspecting his claw-like hand as though painfully imagining how it would be without a finger.

An eager furtiveness settled down on the crew after it had listened to Old Tom, whose hard thin voice told of the arrangements. He had taken charge. No one asked him to; but he wanted the thing done right.

He said that just before the watch on deck was relieved at twelve o'clock Brundage and Smith were to be on the port side of the forecastle, foot to foot; and at the first stroke of the bell, begin. Might they both cut holes in themselves, spoilin' the supper of honest men!

The awning over the poop had been taken down. The women were on deck, sitting together, faces to windward.

Gorvhalsen tramped about, talking with Matt Ward, who listened broodingly, his eyes again and again going toward Jeanne Vaughn.

The first mate, Adams—the initial letter had been dropped by the forecastle—warily watched the wind, for the captain was, or was trying to appear, a crank about keeping the yards trimmed and treated the mates with increasing coolness.

The moon looked down brilliantly. Whispering foam murmured like a host of lips as it ran along the *Heraldr's* side, marking her course with faint sparkling fire on the black waters that quickly washed out the wake.

Brundage returned uncommunicative hard glances to the curious men who offered talk, and he took a short turn up and down the main deck, alone.

McGuire fell into step beside him. McGuire's fingers, recently with idle coolness presented to Dicer's gambling-fever, were unsteady as he put match to pipe-bowl. He had, he said, made Smith uncertain. The man would forget the *Mariana*. The fight was needless.

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"Let 'im off, Jake. If I'd known what you were goin' to do, I wouldn't 've told you. Let 'im off. I'll joke him till he never wants to hear o' ye again."

"He's got my chance," said Brundage. "And he knows the use of a knife. Now shove off. Seeing us together he may get leary."

"But Jake——"

Brundage walked away.

McGuire went forward, depressed. For a pirate with a thousand pounds on his head he was much troubled by the killing of a man.

THE port watch edged restlessly forward, waiting; then broke into a tiptoed shuffle at the first stroke of the midnight bell. A wide circle of strained faces swiftly appeared around Brundage and Smith.

The suspense of a fight's beginning held them to low hoarse whispers, cursings as they jostled for room to see into the swaying pool of moonlight that shifted with the dip and rise of the ship. The vagueness of the moon gave a spectral glow.

The click of steel was heard. The two men, both almost old, but hard-bitten and tough, crouched reachingly, each with his left hand thrust out stiffly behind. Like shadow-men, fantoms, they were poised cautiously, the knives crossing. Each put much pressure in the wrist to bear down the other's guard, then lunge for throat or heart. There was nothing of the hot-angered barroom scramble of wild sweeps and slashes. They were watchful, slow, murderous.

McGuire watched with low-lidded intensity. Clobb with a loud whisper echoed words that McGuire had put into his ear, and warned anybody that took a hand in this fight by tripping or shoving to expect to have his head loosened on his neck.

Dicer elbowed viciously to keep from being crowded and shouted low words at Smith.

The excitable Frenchman jangled his earrings as he followed in pantomime the movements of the fighters. Sharp, strange low-pitched oaths burst on his lips. Moonlight glinted from the crucifix on his naked breast.

"Call the starboard watch," Adams had said, speaking impersonally into the waist.

Some one had answered: "Aye sir, call the watch."

A moment later Adams saw that something was going on forward. He called three men rapidly by name. No answer came back. Gorvhalsen and Matt Ward, quick to notice that something was wrong, paused.

Adams sprang down the ladder. Already voices with increasing excitement rose.

"A fight—I'll give 'em a fight!" he cried, jumping along the deck.

"Cut 'im open—yah-ee!—now you've got 'im—look out, Smith—look out—a-ee-eee."

Words, phrases mingled and were broken with the shrill, sharp, harsh brute sounds, inarticulate, that men have carried up with them from the jungles before language was formed.

Gorvhalsen, like a gorilla who has heard the noise of a tribe-battle from afar, scrambled swiftly down the ladder and over the deck.

Ward, with the traditional hesitancy of a captain to leave his deck because of a forecastle disturbance, paused; but he scarcely touched the ladder when he did go.

Adams had burst through the circle, giving blows and kicks to part a way; then checked himself, staring, as Smith reeled with arms outstretched and fell back. The hilt of a knife was firmly set between the left side's ribs.

Brundage, gashed on his own breast up near the neck, looked down intently at the knife's handle.

" 'E tripped 'im.' " Dicer squawked, or tried to, for his voice was smothered with a crashing blow in the mouth from McGuire's elbow. Dicer was a bad loser.

"Into irons with him!" Matt Ward roared, a hand leveled at Brundage.

Gorvhalsen stood by Brundage, looking him over. The huge black Dane, swaying, eyed him curiously, admiringly. Brundage dripped blood. Gorvhalsen said that the fight was fair.

"Look at the man, Ward. He needs brandy."

Ward lost his head and cried—

"By the gods, I'm captain here!"

Gorvhalsen ignored him; it was doubtful if he even heard, for he was asking Brundage what it was all about.

"An old grudge," said Brundage coldly, disdaining even the warmth of defending himself, and indifferent to sympathy.

Gorvhalsen nodded approval. He took Matt by the arm and started off, half-dragging, half-leading him, talking pleasantly in high tones of the valorous way to end quarrels. He was big, dominant, careless, not even aware that he was humbling the captain.

Adams called out, "Into irons, sir?"

Gorvhalsen answered first—

"Irons, no. Not on *my* ship."

So it was that Smith's soul found a hole in his heart and went zipping noiselessly off to be measured and weighed by God. Old Sails, nearly tottering from age, stitched the body carefully in worn canvas with iron links at the feet; but Smith was dumped over without a yard being backed or a word said to ease his troubled ghost.

Matt Ward was too drunk for days to care who died or how many, much less in what fashion they were pitched toward ——. And the crew, without liking Gorvhalsen the more, cursed their captain for yielding an inch of his deck to any man.

Adams ran the ship, and Jeanne Vaughn, brilliant in colors, was with him much of the

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time; and when he was below, Swanson, second mate, had the deck, and then she was with or near him. Men came back from watches at the wheel to tell the forecastle how she had looked at them from the corners of her eyes; and, they said excitedly, sometimes she smiled and her eyelids fluttered.

XI

THE story of the iron bark for which the *Heraldr* was on a treasure-hunt was known and discussed in every part of the Pacific. She had been owned by her captain, formerly a German trading-skipper, named Gunmeyer. He had got a fortune out of rich shell and pearls, then bought the *Mariana*, intending after one voyage from Sydney to England to put her under the German flag and engage in South American trade from Europe. He was done with the South Pacific.

Loaded with a general cargo of wool, wheat, timber, a small gold shipment, eight passengers, eighteen men and three mates, she had put out of Sydney and never touched at Hobart, where she was expected the following Tuesday.

A storm had come up her first night out. Ships were knocked about and aground as in every storm off the Australian coast. Shipping men then recalled that Gunmeyer was a bull-headed "Dutchman" who would stick to bad judgment rather than admit that he had made a mistake, so perhaps the *Mariana* had gone on the rocks.

Later a little trading-schooner came in with the *Mariana's* passengers, most of the crew and the three mates; and their story was quickly scattered to all ports, where it curled the hair of master mariners and gave ship-owners a feeling not unlike chills and fever.

XII

MR. BUTLER, who had been first mate on the *Mariana*, had the most to tell.

The officers, he said, had discovered before the moorings were cast that Captain Gunmeyer was superstitiously fearful. Gunmeyer was a short dumpy man with bulging cheeks and many bright buttons on his coat. As he had walked up and down the poop a monstrous black cat was leisurely crossing his path when he glanced down. He yelled as though he had seen the devil:

"Gid dot tam ding off! Gid him off! Ow, Gott, a blag cat!"

Mr. Butler swung a foot at the animal. Without looking around, it trotted a little faster, lightly bounded into the companionway and disappeared. The steward and a galley-helper searched high and low, but could not find so much as a black hair.

Captain Gunmeyer explained that he had never liked cats.

"*Schreklich!* Id vas a pad omen."

The officers soon found that there was worse than cats the matter with Gunmeyer. However he had got hold of master's papers, his seamanship had scarcely expanded with his good fortune from the little schooner to the bark; and matters were "worsed" by his not being willing to take advice or make up his own mind.

Mr. Butler knew that a storm was coming almost as soon as the barometer did, and all afternoon had the crew jumping to bend on storm canvas and getting out preventer gear.

The clouds came on swiftly, but there was scarcely any wind, though the seas rolled heavily from the east. Far-away thunder drummed echoingly. Sails flapped, listless, with barely enough wind to give the bark a helm,

Mr. Butler warned the captain that he had better not heave to, for if the wind should veer and get behind that beam sea they would all be scrambling over the rocks next morning, looking for a breakfast of barnacles.

Passengers huddled about on the quarter-deck. They were filled with the depression of the windless evening, full of ghastly light shot by the dying sun into the murky northward heaven from whence the clouds with heavy tramp of thunder and flicker of lightning came on with great smoke-like heads, slowly tumbling and writhing across the sky. Children cried.

At eight o'clock the watches were set, but Gunmeyer asked Mr. Butler to keep the deck.

The bark rolled heavily. A dead calm fell.

The storm broke with a gust of wind that jarred the backstays, then died away. The lightning was as bright as any that Mr. Butler had ever seen; the thunder as loud as he had heard. The first drops of rain that came to the deck left big splotches of wet as though half a goblet had been emptied there. A downpour followed.

The wind came in flurries. Canvas slapped gustily. The sea tossed and beat the rolling bark. Thunder crashed with renewed violence; lightning flared.

The lightning seemed to unnerve Gunmeyer. Again and again he threw his hands to his eyes to shut out the sweeping fire that lanced zigzaggedly across the sky, tore clouds to fragments and showed white-headed waves frantically tumbling. Gleaming trickles of fire played along the gaffs, down shrouds and stays, glimmering though the rigging.

"I vill lose mine shib—mine shib!" Gunmeyer cried.

Mr. Butler told him that the *Mariana*, being iron, could be hit by lightning forty times without loosening a rivet; and that made the captain angry. He called Mr. Butler a fool and began to bellow about the amount of

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canvas set. He ordered the flying jib taken in and reefs put in the mainsail.

"But there's wind coming," Mr. Butler cried. "A gale of it—and there—there's the rocks you'll be on in the morning if you don't claw off."

The wind came and came hard. The rain had stopped. The clouds were flying by, and the wind hauled quickly about two points to the east. The *Mariana* began to plunge sluggishly and make leeway.

By midnight the wind had increased and hauled another point to the east. The yards were braced up sharp, but the bark did not have enough canvas on her and was making leeway. She rolled drunkenly; seas broke over the bulwarks, a boat was staved in.

Gunmeyer said that he was going to heave to and ride out the blow.

"Heave to! Heave to, sir!" Mr. Butler cried. "The time's gone when we can heave-to. We *are* making leeway—an' there's the the mainland! We need more canvas—ought to take the reefs out of the mainsail. We have to get out to sea!"

But Gunmeyer said that he would do it in his own way. He ordered all hands called; but even when both watches were on deck, Gunmeyer still hesitated.

The bark pitched desperately. The men, feeling that they could scarcely live in the waist, had started to come on to the poop; but Gunmeyer told them to keep off. They were standing by, clawing themselves out of the water, milk-white and sizzling, that overran the deck.

Gunmeyer shouted to the second mate to double-reef the fore and maintopsails.

The wind shrilled through the rigging, its high, sustained, interminable notes like the wail of witches. Gunmeyer stared into the wind, pouring fiercely from the compass-point of east by north. The seas beat, pounded, tossed and flooded the bark.

Two men, braced in holdfasts, held the wheel watchfully.

Mr. Butler steadied himself with an uplifted hand to a backstay and looked at the captain. It would be disastrous to try to heave to in that wind and sea; it would mean a wreck before morning if she were hove to off that lee shore.

It was mutinous to oppose a captain's orders, but Mr. Butler said he was just about ready to do that very thing; then, for some reason that he could not explain, he turned and stared at the top of the leeward ladder. He looked at nothing but darkness and spume, but stared on and on, his gaze held right there by he knew not what. And as he looked a half-naked figure came up out of the cold, dark, milk-covered water and swiftly reached the poop deck.

WITH all the crew roused out, and as yet unfamiliar with many faces, Mr. Butler took him at first for one of the forecastle men and shouted at him to know what he wanted, coming aft like that.

The light was indistinct, but it was clear enough for Mr. Butler soon to see that this man had not been present at the muster. The face would have been remembered, if seen ever so quickly, anywhere.

He had never, he said, seen such a face, such intensity.

The night was cold and water-soaked; inactive fingers would soon be numbed, but this man was bare to the waist, his canvas trousers were cut away at the knees; his hair flying, his feet bare, hands empty. He did not answer or look toward Mr. Butler, who started for him, but paused.

The man seemed determinedly on business that he had a right to be about. He came to the skylight, where a glow outlined his features more distinctly as he stared at the captain.

Mr. Butler got the impression of great ferocity, and admitted quite frankly that he did have the quick disturbing impression that this fellow *had* come up out of the sea.

Gunmeyer had turned his face indecisively upward toward the topmasts, quivering outward in short stiff bends as if jerked and released by a baby giant's playful fingers.

The man, looking across the skylight, said in a voice not loud, but sharp, metallic as the blow of iron on brass, propulsive as though the word was thrown—

"Gunmeyer!"

Mr. Butler, so *he* said, was about to spring with a punishing blow for such contemptuous and unseamanly approach of the captain; but he was turned to inaction by Gunmeyer's face. It exploded into fright. He sprang off the deck. His was a smothered, inarticulate cry. The popping eyes thrust themselves forward, almost leaving their sockets. He screamed, but his hoarse voice cracked in the hopeless cry of, *"Mein Gott! Mein Gott!"*

Throwing his arms in an attitude of abject surrender, Gunmeyer backed away, shifting unsteadily with the reel of the deck. There was no question as to what his action meant; he knew that he was seeing a specter, one that had haunted him long before it became visible.

The wheelmen cried out warningly. Their shout was directed, or seemed to be, toward that half-naked figure, even metallic in its poise, braced motionless against the skylight.

Glancing over his shoulder as he went, Mr. Butler fetched the mizzen rigging with a mighty bound. He explained that alarm, unbecoming in an officer, by the size of the wave; and his mind was a little confused because he thought

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the wheelmen had deliberately shifted the helm to sweep the deck.

At this point Mr. Butler could not perhaps wisely be taken as the most trustworthy of witnesses. By his own admission he was unsettled of mind. Wisps of ghost-thought had got into his brain. The size and deadliness of the wave was his defense against the suspicion of cowardice.

Anyway, the poop was boarded by a mountain, hissing with an arm of tongues, splotched by patches of foam. The black mass had come up and up with a slow towering movement while the bark's stern sank helplessly; and with a long-drawn powerful *shh-ua-a*—loud as a chorus of screams—the wave eased itself on to the prostrate poop, overflowing, spreading, weighting it down and down. Voices amidship were flung aloft, and men aloft cried out:

"We're gone!" "The mizzen—cut!" "—— lost!"

Other voices answered with curses.

There was nothing, Mr. Butler said, but water below him. He felt it at his legs. The skylight glowed like a submerged phosphorescent rock. All else was blackness underneath.

With the sustained laboring tug and jerk of a man pulling himself out of quicksand, the ship rolled heavily, slowly, straining. She groaned in the voice of a nearly gone strong man, and the water rolled with ponderous rapidity to leeward, glancing tons with cataractal roar on to the maindeck and snapping quarter boat and falls as it went over the side.

When he saw her wallowing up, the flood of a broken dam boiling to starboard, he hung peeringly like a man above a whirlpool into which his companions have vanished.

Coming out of the water, stationary as iron men, were the figures at the wheel. One was bare-headed.

An unfamiliar voice reached him in a slow unagitated—

"Ease 'er now—ease 'er, Jake."

Mr. Butler had the swift alarming suspicion that he was between warm blankets in the front room of the Sydney Haven; that there was no *Mariana*, no Gunmeyer, no naked figure out of the sea, no black mountain just drawing its foaming skirts off the poop, for the voice of that same weather helmsman went on—

"— a bloomin' mermaid stole my hat."

It was incredible. Holdfasts or not, the wheelmen would have been smothered if not torn loose and carried over the side.

But right there, too, hands free and body erect, not three feet from where he had disappeared under the water, that naked fellow stood. Captain Gunmeyer was not seen and was never seen again.

XIII

HURRICANE WILLIAMS had taken over the *Mariana*. Without hesitation he gave orders and so they were taken. Over and over his voice sang out, the hard tone carrying through shriek of rigging and pound of seas. He did not use an oath, but every word whipped like a curse, explosively, fierce.

The second mate, Mr. Edwins, was aloft at work on the topsails, when the strange voice reached him, saying to turn out the reefs. He obeyed because there was work to do and questions could be asked later.

Two Kanakas leaped the windward ladder and relieved the wheelmen; one of whom, a grim tall old fellow, told Mr. Butler to stand by the weather rail and keep quiet.

Mr. Butler tried to ask questions and protest, but was soon sure that it would be death to refuse; and he believed that the entire crew was in the plot to seize the bark, for even when the men swarmed on to the poop at their work and could see Williams clearly, they did not falter.

The crew in turn had not really been familiar enough with the Dutch captain to know how he would behave in a storm with his clothes off; and when they got close enough to see that he was a stranger they wondered, but thought it must be all right; for Mr. Butler was standing by, just as though the captain had taken the deck. Whoever he was, he was not afraid of canvas.

They were ordered to set the close-reefed foresail and to take the reefs from the mainsail. It took well over two hours to heave the sail up with halyards at the capstan, and all the while they were drenched by seas that threatened to sweep them overboard. They were kept so busy working they had no time to think.

Williams scarcely stirred though others were shunted to and fro by the deck's heave. He could not have appeared more indifferent toward the crew had he been their lawful captain.

The *Mariana* had three Kanakas in her crew, but there were more than that about the deck. They worked willingly and hard.

All the while the sail was being set, the bark shivered and plunged. Rigging screeched. Vibrant intensity was everywhere. The canvas bulged hard as granite. Only the stars, remote, cold, were at peace. All else was tumult and tossing, whining, roaring and shrill creaking; bulkheads groaned and every rivet whimpered. Backstays hummed the key of the breaking-point. The deck was a mill-race.

Forward there was clang and clatter as though some traitor had got adrift and was battering and signaling to the seas. The deck-house was partially wrecked. Men cried out about it.

The forecastle quarters were awash. Raffle

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was about the deck, under water. Rope-ends like long threshing snakes whipped about. Men in oilskins clawed themselves along their rigged lifelines, browsing tacks and hauling clewlines, tightening stays, wearily pulling themselves aloft.

That madman seemed determined to set every stitch of canvas. The confusion over the decks, the wind's howl and eldritch orchestration of rigging, the heeling and pitching of the bark, gave the impression of impending disaster. Men expected the masts to go or at least that sails would cannonade off from bolt-ropes. Something had to go.

Canvas was being piled on and on. Stays whanged like fiddle-strings under rapid awkward fingers. Torrential rain seemed to be falling under the starry sky—spray fell so thickly. Blobs of water flew, white with foam. Canvas leaned from stays and yards like the swollen breasts of great birds. Something under that pressure *had* to go.

The heavy chest that had battered the deckhouse was swishing, thumping, knocking at bulwarks, threatening men's legs. It became an elusive, feared thing.

Mr. Edwins and three men had gone after it. In a leeward roll they were knocked and flung away, swirled by the shipped sea. The thing hid under the frothing water—as though knowing men were in pursuit, it sneaked off, was not to be found, and lay like a feared animal in ambush.

They heard it blundering in an alley, seeking cover.

That voice—men began to think of him as a voice—had said to make it fast. A Kanaka went in after it with a line. The line saved him when the rail dipped. Had he got his hands on the chest he could have done nothing with it. Told to go, he went.

"That chest—fast!" The voice, touched with impatience for an order repeated, went like a blow through trumpeted hands.

"Yes sir, fast!" Mr. Edwins shouted.

There had been an ominous bump, like a muffled treacherous blow, as the chest furtively drifted down into the waist and brought up against the starboard bulwarks. It would have been a good thing had it knocked through; but it was the part of seamen to do as told.

Dark figures dropped from the mainmast windward rigging, grasping rope-ends as a hill's angle came up under their feet, then with the roll to starboard they scooted, converging in a cluster at the mast, grasping pins to hold by.

Water surged and slapped about them, hissed and boiled at them. More difficult than dangerous, their task awaited them somewhere near by. The chest, partially filled, submerged but afloat—a miniature derelict—swished heavily. Water was sweeping into it. The lee rail was awash or under at every roll; and the roll's tilt to windward that sent water and chest inboard would, seemingly with powerful magnetic attraction, pull the men back and hold them from jumping for their iron-bound prey.

They waited, clinging about the mast; peering, strained, silent as if saving life. They were full of anger at a hated, baffling, sneaky thing with iron corners that might smash a man.

A bearded shellback saw it or thought that he did. He cried out and pointed. Eyes strained into the sizzling snow-froth as though from a raft for a sail's speck; five seamen, ocean-battlers, hunting down a chest that had gone adrift. Out it came, swirling heavily.

"Le's go!" cried Mr. Edwins, bending forward, fighting against gravity.

With the slow turn of the deck as the *Mariana* settled in the plunge down another mountain slope, the men dropped away, gravity with them, anger in their hearts.

The water fled before them, pulling at the chest, saving it from the hands of men. The chest struggled, submerged. It did not want to fight, only to get away.

Men clawed it, pounded it, lay on it. They forgot the ocean, the ship, everything. They would have ridden it over the rail and into the sea. They were slewed back and forth from mainmast to bulwark. They would not give up. The frenzy of beating something that baffled was on them. There was nothing to grip it by. The shackles of handles had snapped when it broke from lashings. The lid was locked.

They fell on it, sank with it, were slewed around with it, knocked over, rose with it, grunted and cursed it. Hands slipped off. Arms embraced it with faces buried in water. They shouted from salt-scalded mouths to water-plugged ears—battling with a chest that had gone adrift!

They were knocked about, jerked around, struck painfully, tossed; but they would not give up, clawing and tugging on that iron-bound chest, filled with the devil.

With ropes they bound it top and bottom, around and around; and the feeling of capture was on them, of triumph, as they paid off and stumbled swimmingly to the mast. They braced themselves and hauled. The chest, full of sluggish fighting weight, pulled back in the leeward roll. They jeered it: loud, derisive, they scorned it. The fight was over.

"Chest all fast, sir!" said Mr. Edwins, short of breath.

"The foresail—shake out the reefs!"

Mr. Edwins gasped, all breath gone. Then he passed the word with a roar. Dark shapes stirred with clumsy quickness, calling the order, one to another.

And the *Mariana* took it. Something had to give way under that terrific press of sail, and it was the big seas that beat her. Close-hauled, she bounded, plunging her bows deep and

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rising swiftly—leaping to smash the wave ahead, rising to beat back the boarders that flashed up at her side.

XIV

AT DAYBREAK the crew hung motionless, cramped hands at pin-rails and ropes. Silent, cold, tired, they watched nothing at all with the glazed steadiness of sick men.

Their second mate, Mr. Edwins, had been called aft. That voice had spoken. Mr. Edwins went by them, his oilskins swishing. They never saw him on deck again.

Brundage was recognized, loitering erect on the poop. The men stared and mumbled, then grew agitated. What had happened? It must be all right—the officers were on deck through the night. But the man with that voice had not been their captain.

A whisper: Have the mates taken the ship—are they running away with her? The mates and that fellow?

Uneasiness touched them. They remembered the many Kanakas.

If the officers had seized the ship the crew would be asked to join and offered a share. Rumor instantly jumped for the gold-chest and said that it held a "harf-million."

"Hever' man-jack hov hus 'll look through knotted rope for this," a voice piped wailingly.

One brawny sea-serf, scarred at the corner of an eye that had a cast, was feverish with the thought of loot, rum, wild freedom.

"A harf-million on this hooker 'f there's a shillin'! Don't ye see she's headin' sou'east? Makin' for Sout' America—get away easy."

"They got ropes in Sydney what reach to Sout' America."

"Slant-Eye" Murphy, inattentive to the length of Sydney ropes, said that the first thing to do was to make the mates pass out rum.

Chilled fellows quickened at the words. Tongues licked salt-stung lips.

"Aye, 'f there 's rum—" said a heavy voice.

Other men protested. They were not mutineers, wouldn't be mutineers.

McGuire strolled out of the cabin, coming forward.

The men called him by another name, the one he had shipped under, and asked questions rapidly, bunching about him.

McGuire answered carelessly, in a matter-of-fact sort of way—

"Oh, Hurricane Williams just took 'er over on an old debt."

Men stared doubtfully.

Williams was the half-mythic figure of shanty bar legends and forecastle stories. It was said that he had actually been hanged once, even buried; then got away and joined cannibals.

More questions came at McGuire.

"Officers? All restin' quiet an' easy."

"What 's your ratin'?" demanded Slant-Eye Murphy with a remote envious accent.

"On his ship 'fore this I was galley-helper."

Other questions were thrown at him.

"Can't say where he's goin' or what he's goin' do—he doesn't talk much. What about Thrasher? Oh, Jake 's very sickly. Can hardly get about. Sometimes uses a knife to help him. Nice quiet fellow though."

"What chancet f'r some o' us to sign on—wit' Williams?" Slant-Eye Murphy half-whispered, jerking his shaggy head sidewise.

The cocked eye, nearly closed, quivered confidentially. Murphy waited, convinced of a welcome. He was bold, rough, ready. The ultimate gibbet was beyond his imagination.

McGuire's eyes from their corners met the eager stare, saw the lust, greed and thirst. He said—

"I'd wait a little while 'fore I tried it."

"Just one man—like me?" Murphy straightened up, putting himself on show. "These others," he added scornfully, "ain't mut'neers."

Others were listening eagerly and shuffling closer.

McGuire looked deliberately from face to face. His smile was gone. His eyes returned to Murphy's bearded, ragged face, as he said earnestly—

"Don't try that with him."

They heard, but did not understand, did not believe. They felt that they were being fooled and were mystified as to why.

Brundage appeared in the waist. Kanakas came too. It was his slow, cold, hard voice now giving orders. It was not easy to think of him as the man who had come on board with them, fished from the same kid. He added to the mystery by being remote, menacing without speaking threats.

McGuire slipped away.

XV

WILLIAMS sat at the chartroom table with a figure-covered paper under his pencil. He was sensitive to sound, but he did not look up as McGuire came in. Nothing but his lack of interest indicated that he knew who had come, and though McGuire rummaged in a drawer that crowded Williams' knees in opening it, he did not appear to notice.

McGuire filled his hands with candy and lay down on the couch, drawing a blanket over him from feet to breast. He stared at Williams' muscular brown back and slowly chewed.

Off and on for many years he had followed the fortune of that naked outlaw, perversely half-clothed as if to keep his body stung with heat or cold and ever aware that he was outcast from the men whose civilization, perhaps more strongly than by any other thing, is

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symbolized by clothes. He was indifferent to comforts of any kind.

He had gray narrowed eyes with the look of madness in them, a short roughly trimmed beard and long unevenly cut hair. The jaws were heavily muscled. He was strong, but behind the muscles was another sort of strength. His presence vibrated the senses that warn one of danger; and he was neither cruel nor kind, but in an unemotional and lawless way was unmovably just.

Whatever he thought should be done was done; and natives who had never seen him or many other white men told stories in their *gamal* houses of how he had punished kidnaping blackbirders.

In those days much of the South Seas was only vaguely charted, and Williams knew the islands and their reefs better than any of the men that went out looking for him. Planters, who needed the natives for slaves, especially wanted to wipe him off the map. He had captured and kept more than one blackbird schooner and used it for pearling, and had piled up a fortune in pearls and fine shell. Gunmeyer stole it.

Williams, who stopped at nothing, came right into Sydney itself with a handful of natives, Brundage and McGuire; and part of them signed on with the *Mariana's* crew and helped to stow him and the others away down in the forepeak.

Williams had had no use for his pearls; he had less for a big iron bark, but he felt that she was his and he took her.

McGuire smiled, really drowsy, thinking of what the crew would learn by offering to turn pirate with him.

McGuire's eyes seemed full of dust. He closed them. His head became lead and went to the pillow.

An hour later Williams spoke without looking around—

"McGuire!"

McGuire came up automatically, pushing the blanket from him as though fighting a nightmare. He was dead for sleep, but answered as he lifted his head.

Williams' glance was running swiftly up and down figures. The *Mariana's* compasses had been found erratic, as compasses are likely to be on an iron ship, particularly after a storm; and they had to be watched and checked by sun and stars. He would not permit himself the leeway of an occasional mistake, and did everything with intensity. If crossed or aroused he was sudden and dangerous. He would not be thwarted, by men, compasses, or anything.

McGuire gouged his eyes with hard knuckles.

"The officers?"

"Well," said McGuire with the impudence of a court jester, "Edwins was cryin'. He's young an' thinks somebody ought to be hit over the head. I put Kabuloo in his room. Let 'im start on Kabuloo."

Kabuloo was seven feet tall with a chest like a ship's bows.

"Butler's quiet after usin' up all the seawords learned in twenty years. Thinkin' of some more, maybe. He's got a plenty."

McGuire hardly ever knew if Williams listened. Sometimes he had seen the bronze face relax a little, but there was never an answering smile. Almost always when he spoke his tone was edged with fierceness that alarmed or angered strangers and made them think that they were threatened. Usually they were.

Williams swept the papers aside and looked down at the blue-print chart. He stood up, a thumb hooked at the parceled ivory handle of his sheath-knife; the other hand was poised lightly on the tip of a forefinger that tried to mark the exact spot in the sea space where the *Mariana* was.

XVI

THE passengers were detached from the life of the ship, given a little world of their own and made to feel imperiled by a suspended unvoiced menace more disturbing than threats would have been.

Always a black shadow, two or three at times, lay across them in the saloon; the natives would appear and stand about for a while, then vanish in barefoot silence. It gave an air of sinister mystery, depressing as it was probably intended to be.

But the women soon saw that they were not to be raffled off pirate-fashion, their husbands were being well fed, so they gradually recovered from their terror.

The children, wide-eyed, silent, fascinated by the half-naked man on deck, always on deck, soon got acquainted with McGuire and developed the habit of running to pry into his fingers as he lazily drifted through the cabin. He had discovered an inexhaustible cache of candy.

Whenever Brundage appeared a visible shudder touched the passengers as his dark eyes searched their faces.

"Mister," said one of the women—being a woman she ventured to skirmish with questions just to see what would happen— "what has become of the captain?"

"Overboard," said Brundage coldly, looking at her as though he had pitched Gunmeyer into the waves, and would throw her or anybody else into the sea if they got in his way. There were no more questions.

XVII

THE crew worked and grumbled. The idea, strong as superstition, got among them that any one who slacked was likely to go over the side in the dark, throat gripped by Kanaka hands.

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McGuire had set the vague fear afloat to keep them from sulking, for their own good; and Brundage's watchful cold eyes encouraged the notion.

Only the Finnish seaman seemed unconcerned. He scarcely knew enough English to understand what had happened, and appeared not to care.

Old Billy, a mild patriarch of the sea, set a good example by advising everybody to make the best of it and leave well enough alone.

Some of the ten or twelve stalwart natives seemed always behind Brundage's back; but Williams came off the poop day or night alone, walked among the crew, turned his back, stooped without regard for who was near, and said nothing but the briefest words.

They wondered greatly that he trusted them, and were made a little uneasy by the contempt implied in turning his back on men that wore sheath-knives.

The crew lost its sleep many nights, discussing things. Men who had turned in, leaned out to curse the sea-lawyers, wrangling below them in the light of a slush lamp; then paused to listen, chipped in with a word or two. After that they would scratch a pipe from under the mattress, borrow a bit of tobacco or lend a slab, and talk, talk, talk.

"— think they got us prayin' f'r 'em with them rags out o' the slop-chest what never cost 'em nothink nohow. An' a harf-million we're helpin' 'em to get off wit'!"

Murphy said it to the Finn, bovine, slow, with the gaze of his dull eyes always above other men's heads. He seemed lost in a daze.

"— ought 'o have our whack."

The Finn sat on a sea-chest, arms folded. Murphy, by his side, jabbed with an elbow. The Finn grunted. Murphy was methodically trying to win every man over to his way of thinking.

Jorgan, a big, slow, thoughtful fellow, laborious of speech, sat with his legs swinging from the edge of a bunk. He sat in meditation many hours of sleep-time, thinking over words shoved into his brain by a quick, restless little fellow.

Old Billy always gave argument to Murphy's discontent. Old Billy hated "mut'neers an' pirates." No matter who had the ship, 'twas a sailor's duty to do his work.

"Ow ——," said Murphy, disgusted, drawing back his bearded lips as though to bite.

He frankly wanted lawlessness and its luxuries. An inner anger grew from the notion that Williams did not think him and others like him of strong enough fiber. Mental comparison of himself with the seemingly puny McGuire, lazy, careless, inflamingly suggested injustice, a bad kink in the scheme of things. He urged the others into discontent about their rights. As for the blacks that Williams counted on so much—"a bunch o' niggers," he thought them. White men have despised them, ridden them, broken them, beaten them from the day of the curse on Noah's son.

And at last, one day, the men came aft, shuffling along, nervously determined. Onlookers followed ringleaders who had bullied them into the part. Their caps came respectfully into their hands as they huddled below the break of the poop. Their bodies sagged awkwardly. They stood looking up, symbolic perhaps of their hard-handed caste—always they must look up, resentfully, hoping to get the men of the high places into their hands.

McGuire lazily hung over the poop rail still like a court jester, permitted liberties. Good-naturedly he asked what they wanted. He had known for a week what they would want when they overrode the small group that believed in letting pretty good alone.

Murphy, spokesman, contemptuous of cap and bells, said they wanted to talk with the captain.

"Captain? What captain? You mean the Dutchman?"

Jorgan, with thick arms folded on his stomach, glared up with stolid thoughtfulness.

Thin vicious faces, rough hard faces, weak and bold, they ranged; upturned, intent, nervous as if learning to gamble.

Murphy, who had contempt and nothing else for McGuire, said:

"None o' your talk. We come t'see t' cap'n. Cap'n Williams."

"Oh," said McGuire in innocent surprize.

Williams appeared; half-naked, sun-blackened, he walked right into their eyes and waited.

They were used to the impression that he was about to spring at something. Even then a few of the men shuffled back slightly, responding to impulse that his tenseness gave them.

McGuire leaned on the rail, half-smiling. He did not move, but lay along it seemingly too lazy for stirring.

Murphy's set speech left him. His cap ran through his fingers as though he were coiling down rope. One leg, then the other, bore his weight. Faces turned on him expectantly. There were whispers, low words, nudges.

He tried to smile with the pleasantness of one bringing a welcome surprize. The cocked eye quivered. He began to speak, stutteringly.

He thought, he did, as there was some of 'em that had no calling but the sea, no place to go but where the winds took 'em, that as he an' some of 'em—good sailormen—might take on wit' Williams, take his luck. There was nought they feared. They'd stand fast. They'd help 'im get away with the bark. Take 'er any place. Tell any story to help 'im. All they wanted was their whack—a good hones' share.

His ragged face glowed with eager cunning.

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Greed and lust smirked through his eyes, through one, for the cocked eye quivered as though winking with immoral intimacy and putting true meaning into the husks of words. Confidently vicious, he looked up, waiting.

McGuire read his face as easily as a Gilbert Islander reads weather signs; knew him through and through. But, uninterested, seemingly so anyhow, McGuire looked at the tips of his fingers and grinned.

Stolid faces with something alert behind them, like stone heads with reptilian animals peering through the holes, were turned with hypnotic passivity toward Williams.

The Finn only seemed to be looking into distance, half-way up the sky-bowl.

The bark moved with long, gentle swaying bounds, the breath of a west wind on her. Ships care nothing for the morals of men; like other womanish things, they ask only for mastery.

Williams ran his gaze back and forth over the upturned faces as a stockman flecks his whip over the back of a drove, ready to lash out with a cut that stings, breaks, tears the hide brutally. The evilness of what they wanted stared up at him through the holes in their heads: they would make him chief, to give them blood-covered gold, looted liquors.

His right hand grasped the rail. McGuire, leaning on it eight feet away, felt it vibrate under the weight of his grip.

"You do as I tell you?" he asked slowly, deep-throated as far-away thunder, remote, ominously reverberant. McGuire looked at him quickly.

Something of a doubtful, puzzled affirmation came back from Murphy.

Jorgan dropped his arms, the big knot of a fist replacing each hand. He seemed expectant.

"Aw he won't jump," a thin voice squeaked reassuringly in an undertone. "W'at yer 'fraid of?"

McGuire casually, idly, searched out the speaker.

The Finn, dream-like, stood as a blind man listens with eyes vague and focused at nothing. He turned his head slightly sidewise as though hearing the inaudible coming of a storm.

Williams' silence might mean anything. No man can be day after day inactively menacing, no matter what his reputation, without the suspicion, a little fearful but insistent, taking hold of those about him that it is all a mask.

Still Williams said nothing.

The men shuffled, uneasily; they muttered from the corners of mouths without turning heads. They expected at least curses. It was, in a way, their right. Sailormen understand storms and always have hated calms, queasy, tedious, indefinite, putting no strain on muscles.

All that they heard was—

"Go for'ard."

It was milder than anything they had heard, more quietly spoken. He did not even look toward them as he said it. "Go for'ard." It suggested to some the wavering of a request; but McGuire drew back from the railing with a quick startled glance at Williams.

Below, a thin vemonous voice jeered shrilly; and as though it were a signal, voices broke loose in a squall-like flurry of mocking laughter and phrases. They had been fools before to let that man ride them.

Murphy's unmistakable bellow, contemptuous, carried something about a "harf-million." Jorgan grinned, muttering contentedly and looking at his big fists. The strain of weeks had snapped. They had been afraid of a bogie, bluffed, baffled, beaten by a pose.

"Go for'ard," was whined in imitation.

"Go to ——!" roared answeringly, triumphantly.

Their few seconds, scarcely more, of hilarity came and passed as a squall moves over the sea. McGuire, quickened to alarm by something he saw and knew, flung himself against the railing; and leaning down frantically with outthrust hand as though to reach and close the loosened mouths, cried—

"Shut up, you fools!"

Silence followed as by magic though his words were unheard. A shadow had appeared over their heads; then Williams struck the deck, fell to knee and hand. He left the deck with a bound, straight at Jorgan.

Jorgan went down with a fist at the side of the jaw where head and neck meet.

They had never imagined quickness like that in a man. One arm struck with a knotted hand, the other with a knife, and both went right and left. Murphy loosened a sheath-knife and sprang; but stopped in mid-air and fell to the deck, writhing in a gush of blood. Jorgan staggered to his feet, clawing at Williams' back. In a flash he was shaken off, his chest ripped.

The crew fled, amazed. It was not a coolie behind the bronze mask; and men who estimated him by the naked muscles did not see at all the source of his strength. In some way, somehow, he had a sense of invulnerability.

There was no more trouble out of the crew.

Whenever in future days there might be ears to listen, they would add their words to the evil told of him. The crew had gone aft, respectfully. He had jumped into them, cutting and stabbing; and they could do nothing but try to get away. Murphy had not been one of those to get away. He was dead. Jorgan, slashed by a blow meant for his heart, got no attention at all except such as his shipmates could give him. But two days later when that Finn, bucked from a yard, fell, smashing his shoulder—why, that "lousy for'ner was carried aft, put in a stateroom, had niggers to wait on him!"

If the Finn had been knocked down for

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shirking work, then another instance of brutal inattention to a hurt sailor might have been marked down in the unwritten log kept by the forecastle.

XVIII

McGUIRE felt, or pretended to feel, that the *Mariana* was depressed, hopeless, headed for the Sulfur Lake. Whatever she may have been before, whatever spirit awakened at her christening, Gunmeyer's touch had sent her hellward as surely as some men's brief ownership lose women's souls.

"Like all her sex, she's moody," said McGuire.

A depressed atmosphere, like that found in a roomful of silent brooding people, settled upon her after the affair with the crew. She became noiseless except for the groans of rigging and bulkheads, the voice of Williams or the slow cold tones of Brundage, who had the manner of an excutioneer.

Even the Kanakas laughed and chattered, if at all, only when out of sight. McGuire slipped about restlessly, a jester in a gloomy court, the fixed half-smile on his lips as though wisdom were given only to saddened fools.

One mid-watch he came out of the darkness, walking a little unsteadily. He idly peered through the skylight down into the chartroom where Williams sat glaring fixedly at nothing.

Then McGuire with a long look at the black face of the wheelman, glistening in the faint binnacle glow, shuffled to the rail and wearily leaned against it beside Brundage, who, straight as a soldier, as emotionless, seemed ever waiting something that never happened.

"— just had a dream, Jake. I hate the things. Sneak in on a fellow when he's asleep. Jake, what's the devil goin' say to you an' me an' him——"

A long arm went out. A hand closed on McGuire's shoulder, jerking him around, while Brundage bent slightly toward his face. Then in silence Brundage shoved him away, letting him fall against the rail.

"I'm not drunk," McGuire protested against the unvoiced accusation. Williams had put all the liquor under a lock. "I'm not. Had a dream, I tell you. You got imagination."

Brundage said something.

"Nothin' on my breath. Not a thing. An' it doesn't make any difference where I got it. Won't do you any good. All gone. You—you don't need brandy anyway. You got something in the world you hate. That keeps you warm.

"He—" a hand went vaguely toward the chartroom— "he don't need it 'cause he's got fire in him. But me, I'm just a— What's the devil goin' say to us, Jake, us three when we're all lined up each with a pitchfork-prong through his belly and the devil toyin' with the handle while he listens, waitin' for us to say something?

"Ever'body else in hell 'll have a good reason for bein' there. Now the devil 'll say— Oh the steward put some in duff sauce for Mr. Butler. Tray was right under my nose when I opened the door; an' I followed the steward into the pantry to grow confidential. He tried to lie to me—lie to my nose.

"An' about the devil. He's goin' say to Williams: 'McGuire'd been all right but for you, Hurricane. Brundage too. Brundage was a good old sinner till he got old, dried up an' took to readin' the Bible.

" 'But you, Hurricane Williams, I don't understand about you. You tore gold from my good friends an' wouldn't spend it yourself. You killed my sons without hatin' 'em. I've seen you kill a good honest devil's son-of-a-trader for beatin' a black boy because he prayed to God; an' lots o' times you've scared my— I mean the Lord's missionaries till they prayed for me to grab you.

" 'I don't understand you at all, Williams. You might 've had a rip-roarin' time of it. You were damned anyway. You knew that. You didn't try to get to heaven—like Brundage. I've watched you close. You didn't get any fun out o' earth. You lived like one o' them blasted desert saints on bread an' water an' no clothes. What *were* you after?

" 'McGuire, my son, why did you stay with this man who wouldn't let you have any fun? You knew you were headed for hell anyway!'

"An' Jake, I didn't know what to say, so he jiggled that pitchfork to wake me up. An' Jake, what are we goin' say to him? Sure to ask us that."

McGuire fumbled with his pipe, then:

"An' Jake, I wonder did them convicts bury a dummy or did they dig Williams out o' that quicklime. He's got some funny scars. What you think?"

McGuire waited, eyeing him cunningly. Brundage cast a weather-eye around and aloft and remained silent, immobile, impenetrable. He had no confidential moods.

Presently the low, slow, careless voice went rambling on:

"—this ship, Jake, he doesn't want it. He's not goin' to South America. He could sell it there. In any one of a dozen rotten ports. Where there are consuls too. Specially where there are consuls."

McGuire paused again to fumble with a match over the bowl of his pipe. The hand wavered unsteadily.

"Now—what was I sayin'? Oh, yes. Jake, do you know he's so against white men an' all that, 'cause the hunger for it is right down inside o' him night an' day, gnawin', gnawin', gnawin'? I've watched him sit an' grind his teeth with his eyes on nothin' but what he can't forget. He wants it, Jake. He wants it as a drownin' man wants air—a white

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man's way of life. That —— mirage that shows a fellow what might 've been.

"He ought 'o get drunk. That'd cure him. Cure anything. But he—he goes naked as a cannibal to punish himself for rememberin' the man that used to be—what the —— was his name? Anyway they hanged him at Sydney an' convicts saved him somehow.

"Now if they'd hanged me or you, we'd acted proper about it. Known we deserved it. You anyhow. But he's got something in him, Jake—something like a devil he's tamed. Isn't a devil. Isn't an angel either. I don't know what. Yes I do, too. Sometimes I get mad when a bush in the path, a box I can't lift, something seems to say I can't budge it—I get mad an' there 's a glow like fire, an' I can throw the box clear over my head.

"The undertow's caught me a time or two. Not much to catch hold of, but it's pulled like a great mouth sucking, an' something, I don' know what, breaks loose inside o' me an' for a minute or two I c'd swim through ice, solid ice!

"Ever'thing gives way when you're in that mood. Nothing—*nothing* can touch you, hurt you, hold you, stop you. You c'd blow out the flame of an archangel's sword an' break the hilt over his head. He's like that all the time, Jake. I," McGuire added mockingly, "when I'm drunk!"

"Yes," said Brundage slowly, catching the last phrase as he put aside his own shadowed thoughts, "you're drunk."

"Nothin' o' the kind. I'm so sober I can't sleep. What you think he's goin' do with this ship? I know. Goin' back to Rainbow Reef with a volcano for a porch light.

"Some day more white men 'll come. An' missionaries. They're creepin' up. They say Williams stirs natives up to kill 'em."

McGuire laughed, empty-voiced, mirthlessly.

"Kill 'em! 'Member that young Scotch mishy he yanked out o' Dillion Bay by the nape o' the neck? Made an awful howl, that fellow. He's still posin' as a martyr—don't know yet he was saved from the cookin'-pits."

McGuire lapsed into groggy silence; and in a little while he said, coaxing for attention—

"Jake?"

Brundage did not look around or answer.

"Jake!"

The bark heaved with a long rhythm before the steady wind. Cordage whimpered softly. Brundage had the ears of a stone man.

"*Jake!*"

Brundage turned slowly, cold-eyed, bored,

"Jake, I know what I'll tell the devil. I'll say me an' Williams an' you come down to keep away from missionaries. And he'll say to me, 'You've come to the wrong place, my son. Get up-stairs, quick.' "

McGuire laughed loudly, swaying.

Angrily Brundage spoke:

"Get below, —— you. You'll put us on a reef or something!"

XIX

THE *Mariana* continued eastward until she fell in with a little schooner that was very much amazed at the request to take off passengers and crew, although the name of Hurricane Williams explained the situation. She finally agreed to do as asked if provisions would be sent too.

The arrangements were made and passengers, officers and all the crew excepting the Finn were removed to the schooner.

The Finn, too, could have been transferred, but Williams was taking close care of his broken shoulder; so he was kept on board. It was like Williams to kill one man, or more than one, without a thought; and to give time and patience to an ignorant, stupid creature. He might sail, as he had sailed, a thousand miles out of his way to return a kidnaped native to his own village; then knock the native to the deck for trying to steal something from the ship as he left.

Anyway, one ship was the same as another to the Finn.

But having got rid of the crew and passengers, Williams did not turn around and head for Tinakula, the volcano near which he made the closest thing to a home that he had. He continued eastward almost to the Pautomatu reefs, where he put in many months without much success pearl-poaching.

One part of the world was about the same as another to him, or at least one part of the South Seas was about like any other; but sooner or later he would head back for the Santa Cruz group, then the wildest and least known of any of the islands excepting the Solomons.

XX

ALL went badly enough, so McGuire said, to have satisfied their worst wisher of ill luck.

The *Mariana* broke off a coral arm and got a leak that did not amount to much at first. There was a variety of minor troubles, and the one most disturbing to McGuire was the fact that he never had time to be idle.

Once or twice when dirty, begrimed, worn out, and grumbling with a sort of half-amused insincerity, the trace of a smile appeared on Williams' hard lips as he listened.

He had a strong liking for that rapscallion, and McGuire knew it, presumed on it, but had to work just the same.

A man of iron will and resolute ideas would not have lasted as a companion on Williams' deck through one watch; the two men would have crossed and one gone overboard.

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Brundage, in many ways pretty much of an iron man, seemed to have no wishes, but Williams gave him them; and he was like a man of infinite gratitude toward a debt that could never be paid.

McGuire guessed, but could not be sure, that Brundage had been one of the convicts that saved the still living hanged man from a quicklime grave and helped him escape; and that Williams, who ever remembered favors or other things, had in some way pulled Brundage out of what was probably a life sentence.

By more things than his erect bearing and military way of giving orders, McGuire also guessed that Brundage had been an army officer. He had a wrist like a fencing-master and swung a cutlas as a cavalryman swings a saber.

The *Mariana*, "homeward bound to ——" as McGuire said cheerfully, had her name changed, a coat of sullying black paint over the gilded figurehead, ports painted on her sides, an after-deck-house stuck up, and such other little things as helped to veil her identity from the casual glance of passing ships.

After the long voyage back she was sliding up the eastern coast of the New Hebrides toward the isolated reef north of Santa Cruz and under the eye of an unresting volcano.

She was going along at a good clip and well in to get the land breeze, when a three-master with a sawed-off but smokeless funnel amidships popped out from around a lee promontory about three thousand yards astern.

McGuire went to the masthead and nearly fell off, telescope and all, as he shouted down:

"Hey, Jake! Tell the skipper he's picked up a man-o'-war's tow-line. Hear me? I knew this hooker was a Jonah—an' there 's the whale!"

He pointed astern.

Williams, without pausing as he came through the companion, glanced scowlingly over the taffrail and passed on forward to set all sail.

Brundage took the wheel, relieving the big Kabuloo, whose weight was as good as capstan on the sheets.

It soon became evident that the gunboat was hanging on to the *Mariana's* course. Whether or not she was suspicious, she had the right to inquire into the business of every craft; and there was nothing for Williams to do but run for it. If a boarding-officer appeared and asked for papers——

"We'd all go down to little Sydney town
With white-belt guards a-walkin' us aroun'
To the —— old tune of the bass bassoon,
That dead men dance on air——

"How's that?" McGuire asked.

Brundage did not answer.

They could outsail the gunboat as she did not have steam up; and all would have been well, but with the drop of the sun they were beginning to find the leak growing worse.

When the *Mariana* had scraped through the coral she came off with a leak that was watched almost hourly; and from pumping once a day, it had become twice; then three times each twenty-four hours they had to make the pipes suck air, which was annoying to McGuire.

Under the extra press of canvas that had put the gunboat hull-down, something seemed to have strained below; and the men were doing twenty-minute relays at the pumps and barely beating the water. If she became waterlogged all the speed would be taken out of her, and it began to look as though they might have to beach the bark before morning.

"Too bad you can't swim, Jake, 'cause we're most assuredly goin' get our feet wet—us fellows that can swim. But don't worry, Jake. Your friend back there'll be standin' by at sunrise to take you off!"

BUT Williams put over the last trick that the gunboat, if she were chasing him and she seemed to be, would suspect. When the darkness was thick enough to absorb a negro, he squared away toward the west and lay hove to with the pumps going. The next morning he put into Havannah Harbor with very earnest eyes turned seaward all the time they were there. It was much like a rabbit dodging under a bush by the roadside while the hound went by.

McGuire went ashore and claimed to have got all the able-bodied cannibals for ten miles around. At high tide, with great heaving on hawsers at which they swarmed, the bark was brought up on the beach as for "boot-topping," and Williams went after the leak.

It took five tides to get himself satisfied.

The morning of the third day a schooner came in. She had scarcely got her hook down before Williams called on her and her masts fell. She would tell no tales for a while.

With kedges and natives in boats hauling away, the *Mariana* was pulled off and took to sea again, leaving most of her tinned meats by way of payment.

Williams set a course northward straight for old Tinakula, whose red eye, two thousand feet in air, winks at the horizon.

Stormy weather came on with low clouds night and day, much rain and some wind. But everything seemed to be going all right, which alarmed McGuire, for he said it was unnatural.

Then with half a gale under the yards and night's black cap drawn down tightly and a misty rain driving like needle-points, breakers suddenly appeared dead ahead.

At the lookout's warning shout, Williams thrust half his body over the windward rail, then wheeled with a roar:

"Down helm! Down—down—down!"

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Springing aft, his arms worked in gesture as he shouted.

"Aye down!" McGuire answered, putting his light weight against the spoke at which the mighty Kabuloo also pulled.

Williams' voice burst through the wind as he roared:

"Starboard braces! Forward there— For your lives—let go—let go—by the run. Let go!"

The Kanakas bowled excitedly.

Williams jumped to the brace-pins, his voice cracking—

"Haul—haul away there!"

He leaped to put his weight to braces, and they came around with a sweep and jerked back on the instant, tearing the slack from the men's hands before they could get the lines over the brace-pins; and the *Mariana* was caught aback in the breakers.

The curse that had ever followed and touched Williams again and again fell. He, who simply would not be thwarted or crushed, was ever and ever struck by hazardous luck. Given more time he might have kept her off, though he was in a bad patch of reefs. The *Mariana's* compasses had beaten him at last. He was eight miles farther west than he thought. The reefs were uncharted, but he knew them.

So it was that the devil finally got the *Mariana* in tow.

She came broadside to a sea that tossed her. Her canvas was torn off in explosions of wind, and rags slatted and cracked. The wheel spun from the men that fought it, trying to make the doomed bark take the reefs, bow on.

Kabuloo, massive of body, had his arms locked in the spokes like a man who has the neck of an enemy in the crook of an elbow. When the wheel kicked he was flung upward as a rag doll from a baby's hand and landed sprawlingly on the deck, unconscious.

McGuire, less tightly braced, was knocked away and, staggering, brought up against the rail with a bump that took his breath.

The wheel was loose. There was no holding it. There was none aft to hold it. There was nothing to hold it by; the rudder had parted from the stern post.

The bark tossed and rolled tempestuously, was lifted with great heaves, hurled and dropped. Men were shaken back and forth across the deck as dice are rattled in a box.

Seas came aboard. With tremendous unsteady broadside plunges the *Mariana* made for the reef and hit it, stern on. Her plates might as well have been of egg-shell. She rolled crunchingly, was lifted and pounded down with a jarring that shook men to the base of their necks. Rain and spray beat blindingly. The main deck was smothered.

Again and again some man with a muffled strangling cry was torn away by the seas that swept her. Those men went out into the froth-fringed blackness like rags adrift, to be torn and broken on the rocks.

The deck-houses vanished: straw would have held as well.

Overhead sail fragments cracked and whipped about, beating on the Finn lashed at the main-masthead, on other men, clawing for life in the reeling, jerking rigging. The 'midship bulwarks tore away like wet pasteboard. The maintopmast snapped. Stays screamed.

The *Mariana* was gone. Only her broken bones were left.

She was beaten and shifted till water filled and steadied her a little and sand scooped up by the waves was jammed around her. Pounding seas swept her like a rock at high tide. The forecastle was under to the windlass-bits. The poop slanted steeply and waves smashed at it, flooding it.

One by one some of the men made way across the quarterdeck into the swamped saloon and up where in the dawn they found McGuire in the mizzen rigging and Kabuloo on deck, silent and dully swaying against the lashings that held him to the mast. McGuire had kicked him into consciousness and coaxed him to a place of safety; but, his chest crushed by the wheel's kick, he had died in the night.

From daylight on Williams fought his way about the main deck along life-lines, helping in the three or four men that had weathered it with lashings in the rigging.

When he had helped Brundage, still erect, immobile, though weak and ready to drop, up through the steep companionway McGuire, aloft, caught sight of him and screamed:

"Jake! Didn't I tell you? When ship 'r woman goes to —— she *goes*—an' takes all hands with her!"

XXI

THEY were on a scraggly path of coral and sand that at its highest point rose about twenty feet; and swept by wind and sea was as bare as a man's palm.

To the westward the purple plumage of a hilly island fifteen or twenty miles off lay like a tiny dark conical cloud all alone; but to the north, in the far distance of the clear sky could be seen the faint smoke-cloud plume of Tinakula.

There was not much tide; and between the bark and high ground water boiled continually among spikes of coral. Death seemed lying in wait there to catch whoever should attempt to leave the *Mariana;* but Williams, as if aware that whatever else might happen his life was safe—or maybe holding life of no value if it was to be retained without daring—took the end of a line and went over the side.

He clawed through, and eighty yards from the bark stood upright and signaled. Not even his voice would carry through the breakers.

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The end of a hawser on a reel was bent to the line, and he hauled away.

Williams' skin had been scraped, scratched and gouged; but he did not pause, though the salt water burned as it would have burned any other man's broken skin. He heaved away until inch by inch the hawser came to hand; then he poked about until he got the hawser's end fast on to a loop of coral, and signaled again.

On board the ship the hawser was made fast well up on the mizzen through a snatch-block and the men toiled on, pulling it taut as they could. There was no taking it to a capstan for waves broke continually over the main deck. A traveler-block with a bosun's seat attached was set on the hawser and Brundage got into it. McGuire's warning advice was for him to hold his feet well up as there were likely to be sharks. Then two natives and the Finn, one by one, were brought off.

McGuire said that he wouldn't leave the bark until some stores were put ashore because he preferred to starve where the provisions were.

Williams, hauling himself along the hawser, returned to the *Mariana*, and all that day he and the four men with him worked breaking out what stores they could come at. He took more care getting hammer, nails, and the ship's instruments ashore than he did with the sack of gold taken from the "treasure-chest."

For two days they worked under a blistering sun, making a seaworthy raft. McGuire vowed he had rather have taken a board and swum to the distant island.

There was salty tinned meat and little water. But a sea-raft was made with a broad sail bent on.

Just before they put off, Williams took bearings.

While they were standing around, McGuire said to the Finn—

"Think o' that harf-million we're leaving!"

The mythic "harf-million" had been dinned into the Finn's ears by the forecastle wranglers until that was one of the things in English that he did understand; and with a directness of gaze unusual in his eyes, he turned to stare at the wreck, then grunted something like a question.

"Why? Too much to carry. Can't hide it on this blasted reef. It's safe there. Nobody'll find it—nobody will ever find it."

The Finn stared thoughtfully at the sky while McGuire, lazily sprawled on the hot sand, regarded him with amusement for a time, then closed his eyes, dozing.

On the top of a tinned-meat box Williams figured out his reckoning, giving the position of the reef. It was hard for him to believe that he had made a miscalculation—had let the compasses beat him—and he wanted to make sure that this wasn't another reef. It wasn't. Compasses on an iron ship are the most treacherous things in the world, and they had avenged themselves just as he became sure that he knew how to compensate their errors.

He crumpled the paper, a fly-leaf from an almanac, and threw it on to the sand.

THE raft with everything movable lashed fast was pushed and poled into the surf. It swamped continually, but they got it through, spread sail and started for the island.

Much of the time McGuire went into the water, swimming along by the raft like a lazy porpoise. He said that it was cooler and eased his thirst. He was taking the chance of being grabbed by a shark and knew it, for though sharks will keep out of sight when the weather is stormy they search near the surface of the water when it is a warm, pleasant day.

But McGuire was an extraordinary swimmer and knew all the tricks of the water, could very nearly go to sleep in it. Frequently with natives he had swum three and four miles out to sea and back again, maybe having to frighten off a shark or two on the way. It was, he insisted, easier than walking; which was no doubt true. Yet he said that Williams was the best swimmer in the world.

Before the raft got within four miles of shore it was approached by natives in canoes, a hideous-looking lot of undersized savages, quite ready to fill the survivors with arrows—until in their own language they learned that Williams was among them. His name was known to savages who had scarcely seen a white man; and he was very well known among the Santa Cruzian .

They gave the raft a tow; and that night, too, they gave a feast at which most of the pigs in the village perished. The cannibals sat squatting in lively wonder about Williams.

The party was escorted a few days later by outrigger canoes forty miles to Santa Cruz itself and entered Graciosa Bay where more pigs died; for Williams was well known there, being near his home, which McGuire in irony had named Asoara—the cannibal word for Rainbow.

Inside of two months a whaler put in for wood and water.

McGuire, Brundage, the Finn and three natives were on the beach with a tale of being survivors of a ship that had burned at sea and of how they had been castaways for two years, finally making their way to a point where they heard ships sometimes came.

The whaler took them off and headed leisurely for Honolulu.

The others worked, but the Finn, McGuire insisted, was a sick man. McGuire pretended to understand his tongue and jabbered at him with words of his own coining and a wise air. The Finn was permitted to lie in.

McGuire philosophically said to Brundage

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that Honolulu was as good a place to buy a schooner as any. Williams wanted one, and not being quite so much of a ship-stealer as legend made him, or perhaps not having an opportunity and excuse just then, was sending them out to get whatever they could.

"To get it honestly," said McGuire, "with a part o' that harf-million we stole."

Brundage eyed the Finn from day to day with cold-eyed hopefulness. The man was sick; but Brundage frowned upon McGuire because in a dozen little ways out of the meager comforts to be got in the forecastle of a dirty whaler he showed the Finn kindness.

Brundage insisted that he had never seen a Finn that wasn't a bearer of ill luck; and that stupid as this one was and in spite of his inability to speak English, he knew the whereabouts of Hurricane Williams and would speak enough of it to tell what he knew.

"Jake, your soul's frost-bit. He's all knocked to pieces and he don't know within a thousand miles of where we are or where we've been. How could he? Nobody talks to him but me an' nobody's going to. At Honolulu he gets all the wages due and fare paid to Frisco. Out he goes on the first ship that's goin' before anybody gets more 'n a glimpse o' him. Vanishes from the earth. What can he tell if he tries?"

Brundage shook his graying head in disapproval.

THAT was how it came about that a Finnish seaman in a San Francisco hospital babbled feverishly in a strange tongue, but with such repetition of the word *Mariana*, accompanied by something that sounded so like an effort to pronounce Hurricane Williams, that newspapers speculated imaginatively.

Two Finnish seaman, brought from the waterfront as interpreters, said in their own thickened English that the fellow talked no sense. That was because he was a Mordvinian with a dialect they could not understand.

It happened that Gorvhalsen was in San Francisco. He knew more languages and dialects, particularly the Scandinavian, than he had fingers. His restless mind was interested in anything out of the usual. He visited the Finn, talked with him, got his story, got a doctor; but the Finn was taken away by death, so that Gorvhalsen fell heir to a piece of crumpled paper torn from the back of an almanac. On it were certain cryptic notations, plain enough to any sea-captain.

Gorvhalsen had money; but even a legendary half-million tempted him strongly; the adventurous quest perhaps more strongly. He soon showed interest in South Sea charts, talked with many skippers, got in touch with Matt Ward.

They had their heads together for nights at a time; then Ward hurried off to Honolulu and began making inquiries for two men whom nobody knew; also to make arrangements for getting together a crew that would take care of Williams and his cannibals, regarding the number and ferocity of whom the Finn had been extremely imaginative.

But Brundage and McGuire had not introduced themselves to the whaler by names used on the *Mariana*. They were Brundage and McGuire, and the sick Finn had not learned that. Nor had his description of the two men, coming to Ward second-hand anyway, been vivid enough to cause him to suspect the lazy well-known beach-comber just because he happened to be red-headed.

So it was that Matt Ward had awaited the coming of the *Heraldr* at Honolulu, and had put to sea in command of her with a drove of untamed devils in the forecastle.

The *Heraldr* was squattily built, broad of beam. She sailed like a turnip. She had been purchased by Gorvhalsen and fitted out for the treasure-hunt.

He called her the *Heraldr* largely because he called himself a Black Dane; and he enjoyed the talk of how his great-bodied forebears in serpent ships with bucklered bulwarks and broadswords wide as their oar-blades had crept along Europe's coast, threading even Gibraltar Straits; and there had fallen upon cities, plundered monasteries, carried away the real treasures of convents.

McGuire, his ears ever a-tilt when at the *Heraldr's* wheel, one night listened to him torturing young Corydon with viking boasts:

"There's a trickle of that blood in you, boy. Think of it! You are nothing but what your ancestors were, the fruit of the tree. Ergo, my boy, you've been a convent-raider in your prenatal past. And Bobert, Bobert, don't hang your head in shame. Think, boy, doesn't it give you a warm eager flush to remember beating with a broadsword's hilt on those heavy bronze-studded doors—a windy starlit night—the flare of torches red as the blood on your sword, falling over the horn-headed helmets behind you—the startled cries and rustlings of the frightened dovecote?"

The boy, with tears that would not be kept back on his cheeks, fled.

Gorvhalsen laughed, his hands to sagging hips, his knees bent. He was drunk.

XXII

THE afternoon that McGuire had first taken the wheel, Eve came up to him with a hand extended friendlily. Her pale little face was frankly aglow. She had seen him among the men, those terribly rough fellows, and her innocently romantic heart had beat a little faster.

No one could have made her understand how

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far from the forecastle the cabin is or ought to be on a ship like the *Heraldr;* and it would not have been easy, had she tried, to keep McGuire from among the remembrances of the most unforgetable hours of her colorless brief life. A child who has seen but one magician never forgets that one.

So she came up to him happily, too guileless not to be pleased; and she was far less aware of what was in her heart than McGuire, to whom the devil had given much the same sort of wisdom that is in the snake that draws the fluttering bird. But wise men are not evil, and even hungerless snakes do not destroy fledglings.

Swanson, the second mate, and Matt Ward too, were on the deck.

McGuire had crooked an arm about a spoke and was listening to her, but with the corners of his eyes on the lookout. He was a born wheelman.

In about five seconds Matt Ward blew up:

"You let that helmsman soldier on your watch, Swanson!"

Swanson jumped across the deck and demanded—

"What's your course?"

"By the wind, sir."

"Watch it then."

"Aye aye, sir."

With a word, a gesture of his head and a glance, McGuire apologized to her. She did not understand why she should not be permitted to talk with him just because he happened to be on watch, and the rebuke to him made her face red. She did not like the ship or officers anyway.

She returned to her chair, and McGuire furtively watched her. The tropic sun had scarcely yet laid a tinting caress on her face, bleached of all color by a life spent among shadows; but her cheeks had been flushed by the touch of anger and glowed. She wore a soft wide-rimmed straw hat with a high band of light blue ribbon. The hat drooped sheilteringly. Blonde vagrant curls coiled inquiringly down along her soft neck. It would take but very little change to make her beautiful.

XXIII

DURING his watches at the wheel McGuire saw everything that was seeable; and one evening he sat down beside Brundage to talk over things he had been thinking, observing, hearing, guessing and imagining.

"This ship's a great little home, ain't it, Jake? Lots o' nice boys around here. An' girls. That Vaughn woman—she's got red hair. That's why I'm sympathetic. Family feelin'. Us red-heads are heart-breakers, Jake. An' know it."

Brundage, without taking pipe from mouth, turned his lean wrinkled face and looked with immobile scrutiny at McGuire's tangled thatch of dirty brick-dust hair.

The sun was sliding down the afternoon sky like a whirling wheel lost from some celestially remote fire-chariot; and the ocean, covered with a shimmering silver flame-mosaic, disappeared in the vagueness of a blinding westward haze.

Men idled indifferently at odd jobs. The crew was growing more lazy and careless of what happened. The galley food was more and more as if it had rotted in China.

"All women belong in ——," said Brundage dispassionately.

Old age had left its ownership on him. His blood and temper were cold and, as with many a man who has been canonized, he had acquired a sort of asceticism through the death of youth. Nothing moved him to the least emotion: no sunset, no storm, no flame-women; nothing but McGuire's premeditated blasphemy ever stirred his nerves.

"In ——, huh? Yes, I suppose so. Most of 'em travel that way—with men alongside of 'em, showin' the way. Take that child back there—out of a nunnery. But she's got the name Eve, same as the mother of 'em all had. An' Jake, I'd make a bet that she would throw her little heart to the worst dog on this heller if she got half a chance."

Brundage gave no sign of listening.

"An' that woman, Jake—Gorvhalsen's wife. She loves him. Strange, the men that women love."

Mrs. Gorvhalsen, a tall, straight woman, would sit alone for a long time, motionless, shoulders erect, her straight thin hands folded on her laps and be as severely quiet and poised as if taking a passive part in a public ceremony; but when spoken to she was instantly gracious. Gorvhalsen's big hairy hands were always falling about her shoulder, reaching out gropingly at her as though absent-mindedly reassuring himself that she was near.

"An' Jake, the mates are both in love with the red woman. The devil sure celebrates Jeanne Vaughn's birthday. She flashes her eyes at every man that goes to the wheel. Maybe that's why I stand other fellows' watches? I say maybe that's why I go so much. Why don't you say something?"

"You're looking for a chance to steal gin—a square-face. That's why you go," Brundage answered.

"A woman's eyes can make you drunk as gin. 'Dams staggers, Swanson reels. I relieved Clobb yesterday at the wheel. He was tremblin', Jake. 'What a woman!' he says to me. 'What's the course?' I asked him. 'She stood right by me—perfume all over her,' he whispered as though he had a bone in his throat.

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'What's the course?' I repeats. '——!' he says. 'Not much. This hooker's headed for the ——,' I told him.

"That brought him around for a minute an' he gave me the course, but he went forward, shakin' like a man in a gale. That's what a woman's eyes can do to you."

Brundage smoked in peace.

"Jake, if you put that woman in a graveyard, walled her in an' locked the gate so she couldn't get out, an' just left her there—Jake, she'd tear open the mounds with her fingers to get the male corpses out where they could look at her!"

Brundage growled uneasily.

"*Ur-r-r-r*," McGuire mimicked. "Wouldn't like to have your old bones rattled by a woman's fingers, would you? Guess you think when a man dies he's entitled to a little rest. But think o' Williams, Jake. Think o' the Hurricane. The woman that had him hanged 'll be right there on the other side with 'er white arms out an' her black eyes all full o' tears, askin' him to forgive 'er—an' trust her again down there in ——!"

"He'll never go there," said Brundage with unexpected emphasis. "Not Williams," he repeated with a slow assertive shake of his graying head.

"How'd you know? He b'longs there, doesn't he? Hanged him for murder, didn't they?"

No answer.

"Rich brilliant young man. Had his head full o' books. His own yacht. Met a woman —then they hanged him, 'cause she happened to be married. That's the way the story goes, isn't it? Her husband died. Woman that kills her husband ought to know who to blame, oughtn't she? Anyway they hanged him. From a prominent family too, so they say. English family, full of bishops, soldiers an' things. Could have had the world at his feet—an' took a woman! Now he's a white cannibal, pirate, cutthroa,t an' this ship o' head-hunters is out for him!"

McGuire kept his eyes watchfully on Brundage:

"Jake, they say the prison doctor was in too much hurry to get to supper or breakfast. Which was it?"

Brundage did not stir.

"Anyway, they cut him down before he was really dead. That's how the story goes. Convicts buried a dummy—was it a dummy, Jake?"

Brundage smoked on, saying nothing, showing nothing on his face as wrinkled as crushed leather. Perhaps he was conning the past, maybe scanning the future. He gave no sign.

Williams, so the story ran, after his miraculous escape from the felon graveyard, got to the Solomon Islands and turned native, living among cannibals in an obscure coast village. A blackbird schooner came along and haggled fruitlessly for recruits; so, as blackbirders often did in those days, the schooner ran down a boat-load of natives a mile off-shore and expected to fish them out of the water and slam them down into the hold for plantations in Queensland. A white man, naked, browned, unnoticed before he had scrambled right over the freeboard, came up out of the water from among the capsized natives, and in about twenty minutes he was skipper of the schooner, and had started on his stormy career.

"Young Corydon's been at me again, Jake. He gives me the shivers with his blasted uneasiness. That gorilla keeps him scared—makes that lad shake like a jellyfish that's met a shark. But I sort o' like that overgrown gorilla. Young Corydon thinks he is Jonah—he'd choke any whale."

XXIV

BY THE time the *Heraldr* had come up the equator into the calms and light whimsy winds, the crew had begun to smolder. Overmanned and underfed, the men forward were grumbling ill-temperedly. On top of that they were being hazed by the drunken Matt Ward.

Gorvhalsen, powerful, ungainly, at once ferocious and hilarious, stamped about all day and shouted songs most of the night. He had tremendous energy.

But the forecastle was in a sweat and bubble. Tempers were short. Oaths begun in good-nature were sometimes turned into meaning curses before they cleared the lips.

Big black Sam-O slapped French Monty and in a flash had his yellow shirt ripped by a glint of steel.

The negro went out of the forecastle with a wild whoop, snatched a capstan-bar from the rack on the bulkheads, and swinging the club around and around, dared the French son-of-a-tree-toad to "jes' put youah foot hout on dis heah deck!"

Monty spluttered curses to the jangled tinkling of his big earrings and from the depths of the forecastle warned the negro that some morning he would wake up dead.

Monty was tempestuous and emotional. Some days he was quiet and kindly; on other days he would terrorize the forecastle and have the air crackling for yards about with his curses as he tried to make every word spoken to him the excuse for a fight

A man yelled derisively at the negro, and without warning was hit from behind by Clobb and knocked unconscious clear into the scuppers.

Dicer bounced like a yelping fice at a battle of bulldogs, shrilly urging Sam-O and Clobb to go into the forecastle and kill the Frenchman.

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Getting close to the forecastle door to jeer at Monty, he was given a shove from the rear and sprawled headlong over the combing. Monty swooped at him. Dicer squawked in terror as he scrambled back on to the deck, breathless, his thin hungry face pasty from fear.

Something of that kind, some fight or other, or a near approach to fight, was more than a daily happening. They seemed to quarrel for the tonic effect of getting excited; but one and all, they damned the ship.

XXV

THE *Heraldr* lay becalmed. The viking blood in her, or paint that made her name, or whatever it is that gives personality to ships as to men, seemed to resent equatorial waters.

She was stubbornly inert, but far from motionless. The water heaved with a massive respiratory movement as if some monster whose breast filled the horizon lay sleeping underneath.

Buckets of water thrown coolingly on the deck disappeared rapidly, leaving brine traceries. The sails, except where stained with tar streaks, were white as snow. Under the awning the women seemed to be stifling. Gorvhalsen appeared unaffected, though heat rose in visible shimmering waves. The stench of bilge-water was unescapable.

For two days the sky, empty of everything but dazzling copperish fire, had pressed closer and closer. The nights were hot, and men crept about the deck, trying to find a place to sleep. The ship rose and fell on long sickening swells, with a westward drift. She rolled in drunken unsteadiness; slowly, interminably swaying up and down, scarcely breaking the surface at stem or stern. It was as if the molten glassy water were hardening.

Far to the southwest a little puff of grayish smoke lay in the sky, and at night it glowed like a pink pearl flecked with scarlet. McGuire eyed it with drowsy patience.

The men were being doubly hazed. Matt Ward had not been sober for a month. Gorvhalsen did not care, had not seemed even to notice.

Mr. Juggins, the boatswain, a regular knuckle-duster and pretty much of a bully except that he did not pick undersized men or count numbers, bellowed around with a great show of heartiness.

Matt Ward was out to show them a thing or two. He was a devil-tamer. He knew many ingenious hazing-tricks and used them; but one hot morning Mr. Juggins hauled buckets of coal that were not for the galley out of the forepeak.

Clobb, his deep-set eyes angrily aglow, said he'd be —— if he touched wet canvas to it.

The Portuguese and half-breeds chattered.

Brundage, who had become a sort of bosun's mate about the deck—and men who had no liking for him had respect—asked from whom the order came. Mr. Juggins said—

"The cap'n."

An unidentified voice gave a contemptuous, "*Bu-uah*—cap'n!"

Mr. Juggins pretended not to hear. He was inside a crowding circle and could not have found who said it.

Sam-O, with much rolling of eyes, puffed noisily and pulled at the collar of a red cotton shirt; it was no way to treat white men.

Old Tom, endlessly munching on a quid of tobacco, chewed with nervous quivering of chin and looked sidelong at his friend Benny. They had helped smear a dozen ships with smoke and stinking grease of the flaring try-pots; but they had never heard of anything like this.

The insult of it made men bitter.

McGuire saunteringly shoved into the circle, cocked his head, peered inquiringly at the buckets, poked a pair of thumbs into the waistline of his dungarees and turned away, whistling.

"You said it, son," Clobb whispered, hoarsely tense.

McGuire was whistling, scarcely more than humming, the tearful tune of a song that gave the defense of a mutineer as he stood on the gallows.

Dicer whined loudly; but in undertones urged the men to refuse duty, to mutiny.

Mr. Juggins tried to be hearty. The men were disturbingly quiet, looking from the buckets to one another.

"A'ter hu get goin'," said Mr. Juggins reassuringly, "yt won't be 'ard. Not ha-tall. Same thing presackly as brykedust, honly the color's not red."

"Yees," said French Monty, the word like a hiss, his looped earrings quivering at the nod of his head.

"Turn to, bully-boys. Hit's all in the d'y's work," said Mr. Juggins.

Men picked up pieces of canvas, took swabs, buckets and coal. They moved off slowly.

Matt Ward laughed. His body swayed a little, and his red face was very red. He held on to the poop rail, watching, though his eyes were a little blurred.

"Get halong there," said Juggins to Clobb.

"I'm no —— collier!"

"Hu ain't, huh? Hu ain't no syler neither. Hu didn't know a deck-'ouse frum a chicken-coop when hu come ha-board. Stow hur jaw-tackle han' turn to," said Mr. Juggins not unkindly, for his own heart was not in the work.

But Clobb answered—

"You go to ——!"

Juggins jumped for him, smashing to the jaw.

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Clobb was a heavyweight of the bare-knuckle school, a bad man in the square ring, a worse one out of it. He fell away, staggering for a step or two, and came back with a rush. It was give and take, with Juggins' barrel-like body taking the heavier blows. They stood up to it and slugged, their big hard fists driving in blow for blow.

The crew came crowding back, eager and noisy.

Clobb was cheered. Sam-O bellowed in negroid frenzy. Dicer darted in with puny fist driven at Juggins' back; but Old Tom, a Yankee for fair play, spilled him to the deck and kicked him with a long drive from a cowhide boot. A lump of coal flew at the bosun, missed, and hit Sam-O alongside his kinky head. He did not notice.

"What's goin' on for'ard there?" Matt Ward bawled.

Swanson, second mate, was by the main hatch talking with the carpenter, and broke forward.

He sprang to the help of Juggins, driving a fist at the base of Clobb's ear and getting the backward sweep of an elbow into his face.

Swanson staggered blindly, and the encircling men gave way without reaching to support him.

The Swedish carpenter who had followed Swanson lunged with awkward embracing arms. Clobb's teeth snapped on his ear.

Swanson, unable to see, had a hand pressed to his eyes, and cried for the men to down Clobb. They hesitated uneasily. Chips was yelling as if being murdered, his ear still in Clobb's grinding mouth.

Juggins, getting a moment's relief, snatched at the fife-rail and brought an overhand blow onto Clobb's head. The belaying-pin ended the fight.

Clobb relaxed, reeling back against the break of the forecastle bulkheads. He did not fall. Coming out of the daze he cursed his shipmates, blasted Sam-O, damned them all. But he was silent as he was taken aft to Matt Ward.

Swanson's nose was broken, one eye was closed and the other swollen, puffed and soon black as Sam-O's skin. Juggins' broad face was battered. Unconsciously he kept putting a hand to the lower ribs on his left side and it was some time before he assured himself that they were not broken. The carpenter with gentle fingers to his ragged ear continually turned his head in an effort to see it.

Clobb bled from the side of his head, nose, mouth and one eyebrow which was cut wide open and hung down. The base of his jaw was red as if a grater had scraped his face. He could see clearly from one eye only. That sparkled wickedly, but he said nothing. His clothes were torn. His shirt was rags.

MATT WARD clawed at his straw-colored overhanging mustache as he bent backward a little unsteadily; his air of mastery was very much in evidence and he regarded Clobb gloweringly. He would "show 'em." Mocking voices, stinging through his heart, had bawled from the darkness night after night at him. "Cabin boy" was one of the mild insults flung from unidentified throats and which had sent him down to the solace of the bottle. So he had hazed them. And here was one of the truculent devils at hand to be tamed.

The men had been sent about their work; but Ward cursed loudly so they might hear how Clobb got it and be warned. His oaths were ferocious and insulting. Before he was done, he said, Clobb would be sorry to live and glad to crawl on his knees to whatever the work.

"I'll show you who's captain. By ——, I'll show you!" And he cried, "Reeve the main-yard whip! Take him away an' run him up by the wrists!"

Clobb, sullen, perhaps relieved to find that it was to be by the wrists, not neck, was shuffled away with the hands of Juggins and Chips heavily on him.

From the poop rail Ward watched and bawled instructions.

Ward's voice had reached down to the cabin. But Gorvhalsen, striding about in his stateroom like a bear in a cage, was dictating to Corydon and would not permit interruptions at such times. His family knew, too well to wish to try it, the result of interfering when thoughts were being tumbled into words. Eve pressed chilled hands together and looked anxiously at her aunt.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen's face was strained, but no sign of nervousness escaped her.

Jeanne Vaughn, her morning toilet just finished with the best of artful care, slipped up the companionway and listened. She came down frightened without having understood what it was all about and took a place by the window that opened from the cabin on to the quarter-deck.

Eve, nervously chilled, sickened by the thought of what was happening, ran to her room where she covered her head with a blanket and let the tears come.

Jeanne stared through the window, from time to time automatically touching the gold brooch which had its color dimmed and lost amid the burning brassy fire of her shortened hair, flaring in curls.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen, unable to watch though she remained quiet, sat in a deep upholstered chair and repeatedly whispered to know what they were doing now. Continually she glanced toward the open door of the stern stateroom where Gorvhalsen was. She was determined to

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go there and cry out if a rope was put about the man's neck.

Life on the *Heraldr* had been very trying for her; but Gorvhalsen rejoiced daily, saying he had never found anything so fine. Therefore she was, in a way, satisfied.

Mirrors were set in and encircled the mizzen mast as if passed through the cabin. Jeanne turned from the deck to look into them studiously, adjusted the black velvet ribbon about her neck, smoothed down her vividly blue, stiffly starched skirt. She was interested in what was going on out there, but could not long forget herself.

She had a clear view of the deck; and, as on the stage spear-bearers add to the scene impressively though scarcely noticed, she remembered afterward though hardly aware of them at the time, the sailors about the deck. Some were stooped motionless with hands in buckets; some were on hands and knees; some in attitudes of arrested movement, but their eyes were all turned in the same direction. They stood or bent or crouched like figures turned to stone and all faces wore an expression of staring solemnity and were turned toward the mainmast.

Overhead the morning sun glanced brilliantly on the still sails. The rays as if by dramatic guidance streamed shaft-like through rigging at the four men under the yard.

Gorvhalsen paced up and down in his stateroom. He, with the intensity that some brain-workers have and all wish for, shut out the world as completely as if he had bolted soundproof doors behind him; and speaking through his black beard with thoughtful slowness not to outrun the boy's pencil, was rounding into a chapter the theory that might did, and was the only thing in the world that did, make right.

To Corydon, parenthetically:

"— so you see for yourself the devil would be merrily reigning in heaven today but for the superior muscles of God; and what a great old world this *would* be if ——."

Clobb was quiet, as if he had been tamed. His wrists were crossed and being tied in front of him without a struggle.

Swanson, having reached a pin from the rail, shadowed his better eye in the cup of his hand and was alert to strike Clobb down.

The long neck of the Swedish carpenter craned over the shoulder of Juggins while the bosun made fast the wrists. Chips cursed whimperingly, touching and retouching his mutilated ear; but Juggins was silent and furtively glanced at Clobb's face.

Clobb's cut eye was blinded by the drooping brow, torn loose from his forehead, and the other was turned down steadfastly on his wrists. Sweat rolled from the edge of his matted hair and glistened over the blood-stains on his temples.

"Blast hur heyes, stan' hoff," Juggins growled at the carpenter who pressed against him, urging over and over with angry whine to lash the wrists tight.

"All fast, bosun?" Matt Ward shouted.

"Ha' fast, sir."

"Then run 'im up!"

"Hy-aye, sir!"

Chips jumped to have a hand on the line; and as Swanson turned away, peering about him, Juggins quickly:

"Give hin, Clobb. 'T were bes' for hu."

Clobb did not move an eyelid.

Toward Brundage who stood tall, lean, motionless by the rail, Juggins said—

"Bear a 'and."

But something in his eyes reached the bosun, who added quickly, looking away—

"Hy, hur arm's bad."

Juggins, heavy and coarse as he was, felt the crew were dangerously near mutiny; and deep down in his barrel-like body he did not blame them.

He called a Portuguese to give a haul. The little black fellow shambled forward with teeth grinning, distress in his eyes. Men cursed him mutteringly as he went by them. He took hold on the line away below the carpenter; for Chips, his body stretched, was waiting impatiently to give the pull of his whole weight.

"Two more hands there," Ward called down.

"Two more 'ands 'ere," Juggins repeated loudly.

No man stirred, except such as for the moment only became intent at scrubbing woodwork with coal-dust. Others stared with sullen refusal straight at the boatswain.

" 'Ere, hu an' hu," he ordered quickly, roaring, but discreetly at two Kanakas who were farther away than some of the other men.

They glanced hesitatingly at McGuire, who made not a flicker of movement, then came at a slow run without eagerness, slapping the deck heavy-footedly, and crowded their hands onto the line.

Clobb's arms were already lifted by the carpenter, who was on tiptoes to jerk them from their sockets.

Clobb kept his face toward the deck. Blood had splattered and dried on the rags of his dead black shirt torn entirely off one shoulder and half-pulled from his canvas trousers. The sleeves were rolled high on his arms, thick-muscled and covered with entwined hearts, flags, stars. His neck was short as a cask's chine. His big body seemed trying to crouch, to hold itself taut.

"All set, bosun?"

"Ha'-set, sir."

"Haul away!"

Matt Ward was blinking down, his hands tightly gripping the poop rail. He sagged and straightened up jerkily.

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"'Aul ha-way, men. Ye-ho-'eave!' Ha-gain now. Ho-'eave-ha-'eave-oh!"

The men seemed willing, but there was no rhythm in the pull. Chips strained his own arms at the sockets. The Portuguese grunted noisily. The Kanakas went through the motions rather too ostentatiously; but the second mate, Swanson, was nearly blind, Matt Ward could see only hazily, and Juggins, who knew the captain's drunken tricks, had no heart in the work himself.

Clobb's heavy body cleared the deck, swinging slightly as it turned with the slow movement of dead weight, around and around. The men, grunting and jerking, pulled him up. Sometimes he slipped back a foot or two, but he was inched up and up until his head was against the yard.

His mouth was distortedly opened. Not a sound came out of it.

Ward cursed him, asking how he liked having air underfoot. There was, he said, as many ropes as necks on his ship. The next man would go up with a runnin' bowline under his jaw. He was, he said, captain of this ship. He said it many times.

He called on Clobb to tell how he liked it, and got no answer. Well, Clobb might think himself a sailor, but there was something to be learned about *standing* rigging that he didn't know.

With that Ward ordered the body lowered, and the men slacked away.

"Steady—steady! Not so fast there!" he bellowed. "Bosun, belay when his toes touch. His toes, mind you. Not his heels!"

So Clobb was strung up and left.

A FANTOM ship lay underneath, bend to bend, and crept slowly out of sight with the rise of the sun that by noon came down as a plummet falls. All morning the sails were lifeless, stirred lazily by swells; and with the slow rolling of the ship, Clobb dangled unsteadily, swaying clear. Sometimes he threw his head back, but the glare was tormenting. He made no sound.

"I'll keep you there till sundown, then keelhaul you if you don't give in, you blasted soldier!" Ward bawled at him.

Gorvhalsen came up. His wife, unable to endure the thing longer, had gone to her room without speaking; so he came up with only idle interest and regarded Clobb.

He was telling Corydon, who peered with strained hurt eyes, that rebellious sailors, tough animals, needed sharp punishment, when he broke off in surprized oaths and backed away from the skylight where his hand had rested on the metal grating. It was hot.

With the casual command of speaking to the Jap cabin boy, he told Matt Ward, captain, to get that awning set again and be quick about it.

Ward yelled angrily at Swanson.

All about the ship calloused hands flinched from exposed woodwork. Paint rose in blisters. Little amber-like beads appeared on the masts. Tar softened on the standing rigging. Hands stuck that grasped it and came away blackened. Men got into boots or hopped when bare feet were put down onto the baked boards, corrugated by the rising seams.

Matt Ward sprawled in a deck-chair and stayed on deck until nearly noon. From time to time he dozed. The women stayed below in their hot quarters. He would stir out of his dozings and call to Clobb, asking if he'd had enough. Clobb seemed an unusually hard devil to tame. Ward said he would be —— if the lousy soldier came down until he had spoken proper and respectfully.

Gorvhalsen had a sail put over the side and went swimming. He was taking no more chances with sharks, but was still interested in them and often called out toward the forecastle to know if any had been seen. He wanted to be notified when one appeared, and he would toss a gold coin into the air, catching it easily on his broad palm, tempting the men to keep their eyes opened.

Matt Ward disappeared around noon. Swanson too. Adams came up from the lazarette where he had been checking stores and had found there were less than should have been for so numerous a crew. There might be trouble before the voyage was over if men went on to short rations.

He walked about heavily, his eyes searching for a wind and often went toward the companionway from which Jeanne Vaughn did not appear. The vane wisp hung like the tail of a dead rat. He unconsciously turned his face toward it, though a breeze would have marked the water long before it reached the ship.

Clobb hung like a dummy. His bruised lips, darkly discolored, were swollen. His mouth was stretched wide, fixedly.

All the men breathed with open mouths. They had absorbed their two-quart allowance of drinking-water—a further hazing-measure—as though they had been lined with dry sand.

Around noon McGuire started across the deck with a business-like air, seemingly intent on some work though all morning he had been lazily loafing, "sodgering" with an artistry that was remarkable. He paused before Clobb abruptly, as though spoken to; and stood for a moment, attentively listening. Then he hurried forward.

"Bosun, I just happened to pass along by him. He says he's got enough—can't hardly talk—but he's ready to do what he's told. Says he knows who's captain, all right."

McGuire, having delivered his message, walked away. Juggins eyed him as he left.

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Then Juggins went to the poop and spoke to the mate. 'Dams was getting ready to take the sun. He listened to the bosun but did not answer at once, walking first to the forward then to the after skylight, peering below.

"You say he's ready to turn to, bosun?"

"Yice, sir. 'E's willin' as how 'e says t' do what's wanted. 'E wants the cap'n to know."

"Ua-yes, yes, bosun. But never mind speaking to the captain. Not now."

Ward was drunk and probably asleep.

Juggins waited, questioningly.

"Go ahead, bosun, an' let him off."

"Hy-aye, sir."

Juggins, saying, "Hawl right, Clobb. Hu've stood hur watch," let go the line from where it had been belayed at the fife-rail.

Clobb fell to the deck, stiffy toppling over on to his face as a piece of wood falls. His body was cold. He was unconscious. He had been unconscious for an hour.

XXVI

OLD TOM saw the first shark. He was looking for it. He had been in many calms and knew that a good way to stir up wind was to catch a shark or have a sick man die. There were no sick men. Clobb had come out of his torture a few days before, dazed and weak, but rapidly recovered and was sullenly aloof from his mates.

Old Tom knew much of sea-lore. It was an unlucky ship, due for sudden disaster some time or other, that bucked the Horn at its stormiest without leaving an offering of seaman life to the waves of endless hunger. The sea demanded sacrifices of the men that sought its favor. Ancient Phœnicians and Greeks when becalmed ritualistically gave up human life; many a man of the early last century ships was knocked overboard in the dark on suspicion that he was a Jonah; but it came to be that a shark would do very well—if there were no sick men on board.

Some of the forecastle to whom Old Tom referred contemptuously as "sup'stitious" yearned to break the calm with an arrow-head scratched on the mizzen; but were restrained, partly by fear of being caught at it and largely by the wish not to do anything, like raising a wind, that would bring comfort to the afterguard.

Old Tom twenty times a day put head and shoulders over the high rail, staring long and watchfully into the clear water. He had become uneasy, mumbling to his mate, Benny, over the significant absence of any kind of life about the becalmed ship. He was, he complained, "used to seein' plenty of fish about"—as was likely on a barnacle-covered whaler with sea-grass two yards long.

He finally found what he had been looking for. A large lazy fellow lay under the bilge shadow of the afternoon sun and stared up with watchfully cruel eyes.

"There's yer —— shark," Old Tom announced carelessly, as though only by accident he had chanced to glance over the side.

Men hurried sullenly to the rail. They hated the ship so much that they would not put heartiness into anything they did. Even their grumbling was dispirited. A shark was something to vary the monotony a little; but their manner toward it was disdainful, almost haughty.

Dicer was different. He did not waste time by bending over to catch a glimpse of the shark. He simply broke aft, bawling impudently at Gorvhalsen, who trod up and down the poop, swinging his long arms in breast-pounding exercise.

Gorvhalsen knew by the movement forward that the shark had been seen at last and carelessly tossed the rewarding goldpiece. Dicer snatched it off the deck with a swift claw-like movement and ran to lock it in his chest. He was as acquisitive and thievish as a magpie.

Matt Ward was below, probably drunk as usual.

Adams and Swanson were on deck; and so was Jeanne, wearing flimsy opalescent textures, theatrical, gaudy, dazzling the eyes of men. With an appearance of idle thoughtlessness she passed and paused beside first one and the other of the mates; and as she spoke to one, would watch the other from the corners of her eyes.

Men forward had been staring back at her hungrily. She seemed to know that, too, and was not displeased.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen and Eve were under the awning, side by side. They arose and leaned from the rail at the cry of "shark." They could clearly make out the long, slender shadowy shape, far below and nearly motionless except for the drowsy circling movement of its fins, a lone figure in the depths of the ocean.

McGuire discarded a slush-pot the moment that Gorvhalsen came shambling hurriedly on to the main deck, and perched himself on the forecastle rail, smoking tranquilly. Gorvhalsen was declaring a holiday.

All the crew knocked off the feeble pretense at work, glancing challengingly at the bosun and toward the mates. They would not dare interfere with Gorvhalsen's pleasure. Juggins swore when told to break out a shark-hook. He increased his remarks when somebody suggested a harpoon and Gorvhalsen demanded that too.

WHEN the shark-baiting began, 'Dams boldly went up and stood by Jeanne and lied in a seamanly fashion to her with tales of shark-catches.

The large hook with the leader of chain was

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splashed over the side, bearing down the traditional salt pork as a lure to the twelve-foot fish that lay quietly with a faint movement of tail and fins, waiting. Gorvhalsen held the line. He wanted to feel the tug of a real fish on a hook.

Near him Old Tom and Shring began quarreling as to whether it was a gray nurse or a bull shark. Sam-O said that he "jes' didn't care what dat fellah's name was;" he "wouldn't wanta be 'lone in da watah wid 'm."

The shark stirred sluggishly, but ignored the bait. Gorvhalsen cursed him. That was not the way that sharks were supposed to act. He hauled the line about in an effort to be tempting.

The fish lay quietly as if waiting for more desirable meat.

Old Tom loudly declared that the Chinks had spoiled the food so that not even a gray nurse would touch it.

"A bull, ye mean," Shring snapped.

"I dun't!" and they were at it again.

Gorvhalsen wanted Benny, who had been a harpooner, to take a throw at the disdainful fish; but Benny said he was too deep.

Gorvhalsen turned to the Kanakas. He had heard stories of how natives were not afraid of sharks and would fight them, knife to teeth. He offered twenty dollars to the one that would go over the side. The three of them grinned and shook their heads. They knew that long, darkly dappled body with the broad nose.

Clobb, apart from the men with a short-stemmed pipe thrust between his swollen black lips and one eye blindingly bruised, growled:

"Go over yourself if you wants. Be good riddance."

Gorvhalsen heard, glanced at him and laughed explosively. Clobb did look almost grotesque with his battered features. But Gorvhalsen's laugh was not amusement. It was insulting. Clobb stared murderously through his one eye, also swollen.

Young Corydon, attracted by the excitement, came out of the cabin, a little red-backed book of Aurelian "Meditations" in his hand, a finger marking the place.

Voice suggested that he be put on the hook. He passed with deaf ears and stood by McGuire.

"Try a little salt horse. Got more uva a stink," some one shouted at Gorvhalsen, who jerked the pork bait about.

He was impatient of anything that displeased: a poor fisherman indeed and cursed the shark, then began hauling in the line, disgusted.

As the hook rose a little fish, long and slender, shot with an eel-like movement from under the bilge shadows and wheeled up and around the bait.

Instantly voices babbled:

"There's his pilot!" "Belay!" "'E'll tyke 'er now!" "Pay out a bit!" "'Aul in. Myke 'im want hit!"

The shark with a lazy sweep of tail glided upward toward the hook, almost touched it with his nose, passed on.

Gorvhalsen swore. —— such a fish! That wasn't like what he had heard of sharks.

But men, with the excitement of sport on them, threw monosyllabic advice to hold it, to wait.

The shark leisurely dived, made a long graceful circle, headed upward and with a powerful drive of tail, rose. A flash of white came through the water from its upturned belly as the shark rolled over lazily; and while "Now youe'v got 'im! You've got 'im!" was being half-whispered, the blotch of dull white on the hook disappeared and the line burned through Gorvhalsen's hands as the fish sounded.

HE HAD got a real fish on his hook and let out a yell of satisfaction as he brought up against the bulwark. He scorned to fasten the line to pin or cleat. If the fish could get away, let him.

Many hands would have given him a haul; for the joy of capturing something and helping in the capture is hard to resist. But he wanted to fight the fish alone; and he did, uproariously.

He tugged and cursed, swore at it, damned it with praise of oaths as a worthy foe. It was not the capture but the fight that he wanted. He pretended to believe that it was the same shark that had tried to nab him when he bathed from a hawser over the stern weeks before; and the crew wondered, feeling sure that he was crazy to have such a thought in his head. They had never seen such fishing and did not understand why they were not told to bear a hand so the shark could be hauled up and a bowline got on him.

McGuire only smiled with understanding. There was a vague mist-like quality about his smile. One could hardly see the line of the mouth curve, but knew that he was smiling. Corydon looked at him then as often before with frank puzzlement.

The crew with sulky aloofness began to stand apart from Gorvhalsen, watching, but leaving him to get his shark on board in his own way; hoping the shark would get free. Some offered among themselves to bet that it would, saying they wouldn't give the weight of a little finger to hold the fish.

Gorvhalsen did not ask for it. He jerked and tugged and heaved. Sweat ran from his forehead on to his great black beard. He puffed and blew, roared mightily in triumph with every arm's length of slack that he drew in, while the fish thrashed and pulled, rose, plunged. The hook had lodged deep and firmly.

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For an hour and something over the fight was on. Gorvhalsen was tireless. Then the shark unaccountably grew sullen and the sport went out of the struggle. Gorvhalsen heaved against dead weight until the fish was hard against the *Heraldr*.

He then took a turn of the line around a pin and breathed noisily but contented. His tremendous vitality was not wearied. He bawled cheerfully over the rail, praising the shark for the fight it had made, but damning it for sulking; and he vowed that if it would get off the hook a half-ton of meat would be thrown over by way of reward.

The men growled. They were, or thought they were, underfed.

"Them Chinks spoil what we do get anyhow," Old Tom had said many times.

But the shark, with its shovel-like nose right up to the water's surface and its lidless eyes staring, waited watchfully, as though it had something that men could never guess in its head. Its fins scarcely moved.

"Now—twenty dollars," said Gorvhalsen toward the Kanakas.

They looked uncomprehendingly.

"Kill him right there on the line. Easy as butchering a calf."

He eyed them compellingly with a good deal of disdain in his manner.

The natives grinned shyly, looked at each other, edged back a few inches and one after another bashfully shook his head. It was easy enough to kill the shark, but they didn't want to do anything for that fellow.

A VOICE floated down softly—

"Make it two bottles o' gin?" Gorvhalsen turned his big black-bearded face all around, unable to identify the man who had spoken. He stared from one to another eagerly, then caught sight of McGuire, perched like a lazy monkey on the rail.

"Gin, eh?" he shouted good-naturedly

McGuire nodded idly, then, drawling—

"Or brandy."

Gorvhalsen gave a loud roar, a noise that passed with him for laughter. He took a long shuffling stride closer and said that McGuire could have it and right in the cabin too, if the shark was given two fathoms of line.

McGuire simply looked away and puffed slowly. He was not even interested. It wasn't worth considering.

"What do you say?"

"Nothin'. I don't want a game o' tag—not with him. I want a drink."

Gorvhalsen laughed. The fellow's lazily impudent manner amused him.

"Just give the shark his head then—and all you can drink?"

McGuire asked it with emphasis—

"All?"

Gorvhalsen was delighted. Something in the shrewd indolence of McGuire, perched on the rail, haggling with a careless indifference, pleased him greatly. He ran claw-like fingers meditatively through his long beard and scrutinized the scarecrow figure, red-headed, homely, in a ragged dirty shirt and short canvas trousers, also very dirty. His hands were smeared with stuff from the slush-pot.

"Four feet of slack," said Gorvhalsen.

"Not four inches," McGuire replied emphatically.

"Two feet?"

McGuire shook his head.

"All right. Over you go. But you have to get into the water yourself."

Old Tom was saying that sharks were mighty overestimated critters; that he had seen men fall into the water a dozen times when sharks were tearing at a whale's flanks and never a man got bit.

"But them wasn't bull sharks," said Shring.

"Worser'n bulls—nurses, like him."

McGuire jumped lightly to the deck, slowly peeled his shirt and spoke to one of the Kanakas, who handed him a long sheath-knife from his own hip.

Brundage had eyed McGuire disapprovingly, but said nothing. He picked up the harpoon that had been laid across the hatch and climbed into the shrouds to be ready to throw if the shark even tried to break from the hook. Many were the times that he was angry at that red-topped wastrel; often he cursed him, but Brundage would have died for him as for his own son.

Corydon's eyes had followed McGuire's every move. The boy's face had a curious expression of alarm and disappointment.

"Throw over that hawser," McGuire said to one of the natives. "I may be in a hurry as I come back."

He turned to mount on to the rail.

Corydon clutched at his bare arm, whispering tensely—

"Risk your life for rum!"

McGuire paused, with head over shoulder, and smiled, saying:

"No. For gin."

Gorvhalsen had heard. His laughter boomed. He threw a heavy hand on McGuire's shoulder approvingly and subsided into derisive chuckles at Corydon, whose face had become scarlet.

The boy was disappointed to the depths of his soul. In an unreasoning humiliated mood he felt that McGuire had turned against him. And after a moment's hesitation with a stubborn light in his eyes he turned on his heel and walked away, awkwardly angry.

The crew's laughter followed him. He was ridiculous, his irate dignity amusing.

The boy was preposterous, crude, ungraceful, timid, but stubborn. His anger was pure pain.

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He was hurt. McGuire had come to be a friend and suddenly seemed a friend no more. But there was more piety in the devil than vindictiveness in Corydon.

McGUIRE fitted the knife's handle to the heel of his wrist, the blade along his forearm and out of the way until wanted. He clawed himself upright on to the rail and dived with a graceful leap.

In the cool green water he could be seen as clearly as in a mirror.

He loved the water as a king's mistress loves her perfumed bath, overhung with silk; and the great buoyancy of mid-ocean depth delighted his lazy limbs. He was not merely knifing a helpless shark but taking a swim.

From the poop Eve stared in half-terror and half-admiration with a handkerchief pressed tightly against her mouth. Her underlip was between her teeth and she bit it almost to blood.

Jeanne leaned so far over the rail that Adams laid a guarding hand on her arm. He saw nothing but the woman beside him, felt nothing but the warmth of her flesh through the flimsy textile under his calloused hand.

The ocean was calm and clear as a crystal ball. McGuire was seen to go down and down, as though he would never turn, then slowly to bend his body; but from under the bilge shadow a leisure fantom shape sixteen feet long moved into view.

The gray nurse, also sometimes known as a bull shark, is a lone wolf of the sea. McGuire knew it. But the one on the hook had a companion, as great a fish of its kind as may be found and of a kind as terrible as the sea holds.

A shrill cry of terror, a woman's voice, stirred the awed hush of the deck. Eve had screamed.

A moment's muttered confusion of oaths and broken words, then silence, the tense staring silence of helpless men who watch the doom of one well known to them.

Brundage, grim, immobile, with hand grasping the harpoon and arm uplifted, could not throw. The distance and depth were too great for a cast; besides the fish lay to the right of him, almost athwart the mizzen.

The men were not sure that McGuire had caught sight of it.

There was the chance, a meager one, that he might gain the ship's side and snatch the hawser if the shark did not want him.

There are few things, if any, more swift than a gray nurse. Apparently it had not seen him; but appearances were worth nothing. It may not be by sight, and it probably is not by smell, but some amazingly accurate sense keeps deep-water sharks aware of everything that goes on around them.

The chances of miraculously escaping unperceived vanished at once as the shark leisurely lowered its head, sinking, tipping itself slightly.

They could tell that McGuire had seen it too, for he was turning again in the water, face upturned.

Then the Kanaka, whose knife McGuire carried, cried out eagerly, almost in triumph. Muffled incredulous curses burst on the lips of the men; and they were silent again, staring.

Gorvhalsen, more than half-over the side, roared in astonishment—

"Great ——!"

Brundage's hard wrinkled face set even more firmly and he lowered the harpoon.

It came down within a few inches of old Benny's face. In a second the instinct of a lifetime's use of the harpoon awakened within him and he snatched it from Brundage's hand, whipping a sheath-knife's edge to the line to escape the risk of a snarl, and bounding amidships, was climbing out on to the main channel in time to see McGuire streaking upward through the water straight for the shark.

Nothing could appear more pitifully hopeless to all who watched, excepting the Kanakas. They knew that a shark will run at least a little way if attacked head-on by a man in the water. So did McGuire. But how far it would run was something unknown; and whether with a half-circle of its great body it would come under him, belly up and jaws agape, largely depended on the shark's hunger—never wholly satisfied.

The powerful fish made a sinuous sweep of tail and flashed away in a long curve, disappearing under the ship; and they saw McGuire's body bend in the water as he turned with dexterous stroke to follow it.

He had then been under water close on to two minutes and his lungs were empty of air. He turned again and with long overhand reaches cut up through the water, shooting out almost to his waist and gulping the air with a sob-like gasp heard all over the deck.

Yells and cheers went up; advice too. He was forty feet or more from the ship's side. Some one flung over the end of a line, but he did not reach for it.

They could not understand what he was about or why he did not make for the ship; and the men grew silent again, watching him.

He lay almost flat on the smooth surface of the sea, breathing hard but continually dipping his face watchfully down into the water and keeping his head pointed toward the side of the ship.

With slow strokes of legs and a fin-like movement of one hand he was floating parallel with the ship's side, not coming closer, but moving up toward the bow.

Voices called at him that a line was at hand, that he did not need make for the hawser. He did not seem to hear.

Some one threw over a life-buoy.

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It struck within ten feet of him, and McGuire nearly leaped out of the water. He thought the shark had him; but his head and knife in hand came up together. He looked toward the ship and his lips moved as if with oaths.

AT ONCE a flash passed from under the *Heraldr's* shadow—a massive dark streak indistinct in its swiftness.

Cries came too late. Old Benny's harpoon sped wide of the mark.

Then the shark's white belly gleamed and it came a full third of its length out of the water with the buoy in its mouth; the buoy was bitten in two by jaws that had the pressure of mill-stones. Its great body swept glancingly against McGuire, rasping the skin from side and arm, knocking him as though he had been caught broadside in a breaker. His knife might as well have been a toothpick. The kind of sharks that fearless native swimmers kill are not sixteen-foot nurses.

A shark's spine may be severed; it will swim and fight and the wound heal; it may be disembowled, but it will swim and kill what lesser food comes near; it may have its head cut off and the flesh be in the stew-pots, the precious liver rendered, yet hours later the gaping jaws of that head will close on whatever is thrust between them, and they can not be opened with anything but saw and ax.

A hungry shark will eat anything, living or dead, flesh, bone or metal, and is nearly invulnerable except for a small soft spot on the crown of its head. There a slight blow from club or sharp-pointed edge brings instantaneous death to a creature as tenacious of life as any that God has permitted to live.

The most miraculous of luck could not have given McGuire a chance to sink his knife between such a monster's eyes. He struck out blindly, but cut only water.

Sharks are incomprehensibly timid as well as the boldest things in the sea. McGuire had often been with natives who frightened them with splashing; and he set up a great thrashing of the water with arms and legs almost within a finger's touch of it, and the great fish sounded.

It dived with shadow-like rapidity out to sea away from the ship.

At once with long overhand strokes McGuire seemed fairly crawling over the water, swimming as he had not dared to swim when the fish lay under the *Heraldr*, certain to cut him off if he approached and now almost as sure to make a strike for him.

But he at least had a chance; or rather he had to take his chance.

He had grasped the hawser beside the hooked shark that was now thrashing and jerking about as if to beat him to death with its tail; but its nose was against the ship's timbers.

Men were cheering and tugging to haul him in—then came warning cries.

McGuire, not half-out of the water, paused, glancing back; for a moment the impulse to jump back was on him. He could see nothing, but he knew those above him had sighted the shark. It was coming. His legs seemed unaccountably long and the feeling that he would not get them safely out of the water sent shivers clear to his toe-nails. He was not sure but that the fish would leap out of the water after him.

He acted without thought, knowing something of sharks and their ways. The hooked shark was thrashing beside him, now belly up, now righted, and jerking. With a panicky recklessness that had the appearance of great courage, he swiftly swung himself from the hawser to the line on which the hooked shark struggled and with feet braced against the side of the ship, leaned down, stabbing. He had something between him and the monster shark anyway, though if a foot slipped into that hooked mouth he would have no more foot. Again and again he struck and at last the point of the knife went into the soft crown; then with an upward sweep he cut the line where it was bent on to the chain and just below where his left hand gripped it.

Then, dropping the knife, he started up, hand over hand.

With slow placid movement the fish, deadly wounded, began to sink, its fins stirring slowly in a weak rotary motion; and its monster companion struck.

As the pack devours a wounded wolf, so the shark eats the unfortunate of its kind.

McGuire, panting and exhausted, was eagerly helped over the rail. Gorvhalsen, lifting him as a strong man lifts a little child, sat him on the deck, praising him to his face. By——, said the great black-bearded giant, there was courage for anybody!

Physical daring, strength, audacity, was what touched Gorvhalsen's admiration, always; and nothing else that men might do moved him.

McGuire gasped convulsively. He shook, nervous, almost lifeless, weakened by the relief that had come at last; but wearily he turned his eyes, sleepily lidded, and presently the misty smile came to his lips. He spoke slowly, with effort, breathing heavily between phrases in a way that unconsciously emphasized the laziness of his tone; and he said—

"This day I know why I've been a *good* boy—all my life!"

And glancing up at a shadow that had moved to his side, he unexpectedly looked into the tense whitened face of little Eve Corydon. She had dragged her aunt forward to see him and make sure that he was not terribly hurt; and she had heard what he said, but did not understand irony.

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XXVII

THAT evening cat's-paws began riffling the water, and Matt Ward in an ugly mood came on deck, perhaps feeling aggrieved that he had slept drunkenly through so much excitement. Anyway, he was savage.

The crew was kept box-hauling and grumbled viciously as they dragged the yards around.

At supper the starboard watch refused to touch the odorous mess. Headed by Old Tom it trooped to the galley and through the open top door he flung kid and contents with a hearty sea-blessing into the Chinese cook's face, making a dirty smear all over the galley and starting a Chinese commotion of shrill squawks and gesticulation.

The second Chinaman foolishly snatched up a butcher-knife.

The men poured into the galley sanctuary, driving fists and feet high and low. Some of them really tried to kill the "yellow bellies," and beat them, knocked them, kicked them; not so much because of real hatred as because Chinamen are merely Chinamen and have no legitimate protest if white men feel like bruising and breaking them.

Besides, the crew had been hazed and strained until it was murderous and looked for pegs to hang grievances on. They had enough of both.

Every man, for instance, in the forecastle blasted Gorvhalsen with an unreasoning grudge for having urged McGuire to go over the side and narrowly miss being eaten by a shark.

McGuire himself had been invited aft by the devil to get drunk.

It may have been that this special distinction caused them to envy his luck, and the envy expressed itself abortively in damning Gorvhalsen and making their own fare seem less endurable.

The port watch had growled wickedly over its food. The starboard let its inflamed feelings loose on the Chinks. The racket was deafening. The Jap boy was caught coming to the galley and smashed to the deck. He died next morning.

Ward bellowed and Juggins roared. Adams used a pin and his fists. The fight threatened to be general with the crew in mutiny.

Ward broke out small arms for the mates and petty officers, the boatswain, old decrepit Sails and Chips. Two shots were fired. No one was hit. The crew quieted down dangerously.

The breeze came up stronger.

As soon as it was dark enough to shelter him, Dicer began bawling insultingly at the officers. He boasted in the forecastle of what he had said.

A squall an hour long hit *Heraldr*, and after that the wind blew steadily.

The afterguard was under arms through the night and the word was "shoot to kill."

XXVIII

IT WAS one o'clock in the morning. Brundage's name was whispered and there was a hand's touch to shoulder. His eyes opened into narrow watchful slits. He did not move; just stared into the blurred shadow of a face marked by the lantern's glow.

All about men, like the restless dead in a catacomb awaiting the last trumpet, breathed heavily, puffed, groaned, snored. The sharp unclean odors of many sweating bodies together filled the warm sultry box-like deck-house.

"Jake! Come on deck."

Low-voiced, Brundage replied:

"Go turn in. I don't want a drink."

"Drink! I've nothin' to drink—smell my breath—not a drop." With a whispering wail, a protest against self-folly, "I've been a fool!"

"Yes," Brundage said impersonally, unenlightened but not doubting.

He slowly put his long legs over the edge of the bunk and began climbing out.

Something was wrong with McGuire; not a trace of liquor on his breath. He was agitated too. Brundage knew of nothing that could, or at least that ever had, unnerved him.

When Brundage, having paused to fill and light his pipe, went on deck, McGuire was taking short turns back and forth across the forecastle and made a grotesque figure in the dark morning with his dead black shirt and white canvas trousers that he had worn aft by way of dressing himself. Also he had shaved with Brundage's delicately edged razor; and Brundage had spent an hour afterward in honing it again. He loved a sharp edge on steel.

McGuire pulled him into the shadows; and with: "Here, give me that pipe," took it from him, right out of his mouth, and placing it in his own, drew hard on the bitter, strong tobacco. "You c'n have this—make you feel like a gentleman;" and he drew from his shirt pocket a long, thick black cigar and handed it to Brundage, at the same time offering the glowing bowl of the pipe for a light.

They drew on the tobacco in silence.

Brundage was imperturbably waiting. McGuire was gathering an accustomed composure out of the strong narcotic.

Overhead the sails pulled the *Heraldr* into long soothing rolls, and the watch on deck was continually being called to braces and sheets—kept busy.

Swanson wore a revolver in a holster that had the flap open and stayed on deck. He had to stand to his watches though his nose was broken and his face swollen, black and blue.

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Some of the men soldiered. Clobb and Shring and Sam-O sat beside the galley out of sight from the poop and muttered with their heads together. If Swanson missed them he said nothing. They ordered others of the watch back into the waist if any came forward to loaf too. If others worked, they wouldn't be missed. They had things to talk over and their voices were not loud.

McGuire began abruptly as if he had been talking a long time and was warmed to his subject:

"Gin an' brandy, rum, wine, whisky, cordials. A great cool square-face o' gin. Holland gin, oily an' smooth. But—Jake, I hate women. They ruin a man's life for him!"

Brundage seemed to nod. He may only have bent forward to peer quickly at what he thought was a lurking figure. But the figure was not lurking; Monty came out of the shadows, scrutinized their faces to make sure who they were and passed on.

McGuire, with a tinge of plaintive self-scorn that did not hide a deeper and troubled feeling from the wise watchful Brundage, began to tell of what had happened.

He did not admit, for there was little that was confessional in his nature, that he had been about as near as he ever was to embarrassment when he went into the cabin. Gorvhalsen had not invited, but had told him to come.

McGuire was a difficult person to fluster. He enjoyed novelty. He loved with a consuming passion the strong bitter flavors of Bacchic vessels and the sense of having earned, or at least of having won in a dangerous gamble, all that he could get gave him encouragement.

The quarter-deck door was wide, and through that he had gone into the cabin.

He saw no one but Chips, working away at some shelving in a port stateroom. The Swedish carpenter caught sight of him and thrust a long neck through the doorway, his ears extended like studdingsails. McGuire thought Chips had the face of a badly stuffed fish. He was goggle-eyed and open-mouthed.

Having stared for a time, Chips asked in an impertinent whine what he was doing there

"Mr. Gorvhalsen wants my opinion on Swedes as a race. I've come to give it."

Chips gaped immobilely until the remark had circulated through his mind, then turned away, muttering something about its being too bad the shark hadn't bit somebody or other.

A STARBOARD stateroom opened. Matt Ward came through the door.

He saw McGuire at once and pulled with one hand then the other at the long tips of his straw-colored mustache. His eyes were red and angry; but he was not quite sure of their vision. He had an enormous capacity for whisky and had been using it; but he was perilously near to seeing brilliantly spotted creatures creeping up bulkheads and dancing roundelays head-down from the deck.

"You there!" he said doubtfully.

McGuire faced him respectfully.

The movement must have reassured Ward as to his eyes. He promptly demanded what the —— McGuire was doing aft.

Chips again paused to stare. Ward's voice was penetrating.

"Mr. Gorvhalsen has——"

"Get for'ard!" Ward ordered loudly.

"Aye, sir, for'ard," said McGuire, but he did not move.

"D'you hear me, you?" he shouted, closing his fists and taking a step closer.

"Aye, aye, sir," said McGuire, and moved—so as to place a large plush chair, solidly upholstered, between himself and the captain.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen came out of a starboard stateroom.

She must have heard Ward and hurried. A silk scarf was about her shoulders and crossed concealingly on the unbuttoned front of her waist. But tall, gracious, poised, she showed no other trace of hurry. Her smile was the pelased, reassuring greeting of a hostess. As she extended her hand to McGuire she turned toward Matt Ward, whose red puffed face had astonishment on it.

"Mr. Gorvhalsen's guest this evening," she said; but somehow without an air of explaining.

"Madam, I can't—I won't——" he began.

He took another step forward, his face filling with dark blood. His tones did have the accent of explanation. He was earnest too; but his words did not come easily—

"Crew—bad—this thing—ship dis'pline——"

With a calmness so natural that it must have been real she replied evenly, unperturbed:

"You do not understand, captain. Mr. Gorvhalsen has invited this young man."

There was no shadow of impatience or dislike in her voice or manner; she was calmly gracious.

Ward turned abruptly on his heel and stamped off, going on deck where he started in to make things lively.

A better man, or captain, than himself would have been driven to drink, probably to murder; or if really an excellent fellow, perhaps to suicide.

Gorvhalsen was overpowering; and his whole conduct toward the captain was unheard of and intolerable, but largely unconscious. He did not ignore Ward any more than he ignored the steward, but scarcely thought one was more important than the other; and probably he would have hesitated in deciding which was the more valuable: the steward, likely as not, since it was doubtful if Gorvhalsen would have put up with drunkenness in his duties.

"Well," said McGuire to Brundage in telling it, "I thought somebody'd give me a bottle an'

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say good-by. But what you get in this world you have to pay for; an', Jake, you pay most for what you don't get. When I looked round, there was that girl again."

"The red one?" Brundage asked.

He must have been paying very close attention to care enough to have a question when McGuire paused.

"No. The white one. You know this tropic heat. At night a bud; next dawn a flower wide open. Some way or other she's been gettin' before my eyes from Honolulu on. An' what I see, I look at. I've watched the frost melt an' May come on her cheeks."

Brundage made a contemptuous sound.

"*Burrr-r-r-r.* Wait till you hear—you'll *burr-r-r* worse than that."

There was not a great deal to hear as McGuire told it. He skimmed, scarcely touching at all the deep feeling that surged under the slight incidents; but Brundage was old and watchful.

FOR a few minutes McGuire had been left alone with Eve while Mrs. Gorvhalsen returned to her stateroom; and he was too observant and learned in the ways of evilness not to see love shining up at him from the radiant loveliness of the girl's young face. Had he been innocent as herself he would never have noticed.

Youth is timid of words, but writes its feelings on the face, unconsciously. He could read all that was there, and suddenly was disturbed away down in the hidden secret currents of his thought and feeling.

Through the stern stateroom door the booming voice of Gorvhalsen in some operatic passage could be heard as he idly dressed himself after the bath. The voice rumbled and leaped powerfully.

Eve wore a fresh dainty light-blue dress with trimming of embroidered violets at the throat and down the front, the best dress of her simple wardrobe. Her head was bare. The blonde curls about her cheek were more than ever wayward as if something of her inner excitement had been communicated to them. The pale cheeks of her little face had become a rose-garden; starlight shone out of her eyes.

She had seen the hero of her secret musings intrepidly glance by death in the worst of its forms; and though woman's intuitive reticence would have kept her from admitting what she felt, her eyes cried the confessional.

McGuire with alert drowsiness saw it all; and he was troubled, as men are always troubled by inescapable beauty which it were robbery to touch.

She had him sit down; and seated near by, she talked to him with a hundred questions.

Had he not been dreadfully frightened?

Yes, of course. But he lied; for there had been no time to be frightened with danger overtopping him so suddenly.

It is doubtful if a man ever knows fright when he is once well into the thick of peril and fighting, but the easy and modest way is to talk of the great fear felt all the time.

Why on earth had he jumped into the water like that? Didn't he know the ocean was just full of sharks?

Something grateful leaped up within him that Corydon had not told and that Gorvhalsen had forgotten, or had no occasion, to tell why. McGuire did not want to see the shock that would come to her eyes when she knew: it was more solicitude for her than the wish to appear better than he was; though no man is permitted by nature to wish to appear as he really is before the woman who admires him.

Her loveliness was as unescapable as her purity; either was something which if not unknown to him had long been remote. Child-like faith makes worthy hypocrites, sometimes. Men who may have no scruples against being evil are often not cruel; and often, too, they have become ennobled by trying to live up to the good thought of them.

Her illusions about him, so frankly aglow in the light eyes, were a part of her beauty, like the cool blue gown with the lace-like work of darker violets, like the warm cheeks and brightly blonde hair; and it would have been as cruel to destroy the illusions as to scar the cheek or tear the hair.

He did not think of all that. He felt it without thought; and felt other things that saddened, as when a man looks upon treasures that are his for the taking, but can not be taken without destroying the fragments of honor left in him. The lonely semi-outlawry of his outcast existence had given him compensations: excitement and true friendships with dangerous men; but it is doubtful if there are such gains to be had out of the careless life as keep a man from a sense of irrecoverable loss when in the presence of a pure, sweet woman.

McGuire had no self-pity and no sense of the tragic, though he was almost painfully moved by her presence and what it revealed to him.

He answered her questions with evasive lightness. She felt that he was modest as the bravest and best men always are, and he looked at her steadily and believed with all the honesty of his inner nature that she was a vision which would soon pass from before his eyes and be seen no more; even doubted by memory.

Presently she said that her brother had a headache, a terribly severe headache. She was sorry. He would so have enjoyed the evening.

It was plain that in a sober, immature way she had a mothering worry over Corydon. To the eyes he was a weakling; but there was nothing weak about the way he had kept his distress to himself and not complained of Gorvhalsen's brutal bantering. One did not associate

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gallantry with the awkward boy, no matter what he did. Stubbornness was the word for his virtue, and he had a great deal of it.

"Robert talks of you all the time," she said approvingly. "About an hour ago he came from Uncle David's room and he looked dreadfully ill. This afternoon was fearfully hard on him. We all thought you never—never—it was terrible! He said that he had such a headache that he was going to bed. Uncle David tells him that men do not have headaches. Sometimes I think Robert is afraid of Uncle David. I've scolded him, but it does no good.

"There are times when I almost don't like Uncle David myself—though I do love him. He is a wonderful man."

McGuire affirmed that he was.

"But he does drink—whole bottles in an evening!"

She almost whispered it, confidentially; yet in some way not censuring him and conveying that he was so vastly different that it was perhaps really not bad for him to do such a thing. Gorvhalsen's huge body and bold personality were outside her judgments; besides, he was kind to her.

The thing to which she was leading, and really did condemn, came out at once, as she said in a watchful, eager, sympathetic manner:

"But he will want you—too!"

McGuire's amusement escaped to his face; but he was hurt below the surface of his manner by the irony of its being the thing he had come for—to drink whole bottles.

THERE were times—and this night was one of them—when he would give, pint for pint, his blood for gin.

But in all things he was misread by the girl, who interpreted him according to her own admiration and desires.

"I know what you think," she said hurriedly. "But people just *have* to do what he wants. My aunt says there was never any other man like him in just that way. He is kind-hearted though, and wouldn't hurt anything."

Gorvhalsen came out with long shambling strides, his voice loud and face welcoming.

Merely being alive seemed of great enjoyment to him; but there was a brain a-top that body, and whoever has an educated brain has moods of depression and troubled thought. But his large towering crude body was filled with the animal energy of ten men.

He looked much taller in the cabin than he had appeared on deck. He was a striking figure in the loose sun-bleached linen with a great black beard overlaying half of his enormous breast. The roughly brushed black hair tumbled in waves about his head.

One of his large hands fell in an idle caress on Eve's shoulder. The restless fingers played with the back of her neck. It was the hand with which a giant of ancient fable might have seized a princess for his castle.

"An' Jake," said McGuire, "into his dungeon I went; an' right along after us that girl came. She chased a big fat book out of a chair and sat there—all the time. Books all over the place. An' potted flowers along the windows. That —— with flowers, Jake. It'd be as if you carried a prayer-book.

"An' right against one bulkhead—he'd knocked two staterooms into one—was a sort of cupboard, a big wide chest-like table with glass doors an' all covered an' filled with bottles.

" 'There you are—gin, ever'thing,' he said to me an' threw a hand across the room. But he kept right on talkin'—I don't know what about. An' there I was, Jake—but——"

As McGuire had stared at the enticing bottles, some tall and round, some square-sided, some squat and bulbous with long slender necks and filled with rich browns, crystal or crimson, his eyes wavered into a line with the girl's face.

An unpremeditated resolution came to her. She jumped up, questioning him oddly with the barely audible word, "Gin?"

But Gorvhalsen either saw or heard.

"Gin, Miss Hebe. Gin for him—half a bottle at a time. And don't remember your prejudice against the breath of the gods when you fill my glass tonight. McGuire," he said with tone and eyes disclosing strong affection for the dainty flower-like girl, "she makes her service the excuse for lecturing me on temperance."

He laughed. Eve laughed shyly too, with her face timidly toward McGuire.

Gorvhalsen, momentarily deflected from his talk on sharks—he frankly gestured toward the book that Eve had tumbled from her chair to indicate the freshness of his learning—whipped back to the theme and went on.

He thought that in former ages sharks must have been as big as whales; and he wondered why in the process of evolution size tended to diminish in the most formidable animals, strong and ferocious enough to resist attacks and, apparently, be the ones that would most surely preserve their species and even increase their size.

McGuire listened absent-mindedly, uninterested, but with an attentive manner that was entirely deceptive. He scarcely knew of what Gorvhalsen was talking.

Eve came to them from across the room with a little silver tray bearing two large glasses, one half-filled with a brown smooth oily liquor, the other as full of pure crystal.

Gorvhalsen drank off the half-tumbler of brandy carelessly, hardly pausing in his talk.

McGuire's fingers closed on the other glass. He knew the girl's eyes were fast on him; but he would not look at her. He felt himself being tested and knew the expression that would be in her eyes if she expected him to

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resist. His ears did so strongly expect her whispered protest that he hesitated a moment, listening for it. She was, he felt, hoping to have him shake his head; but he did not—he could not.

HE LIFTED the glass from the tray. He raised it to his lips——

"An' Jake, I nearly choked before I could stop all that —— water goin' down my throat. 'Too strong for you, eh?' says that black ——, grinning at me. He'd downed a half-pint o' brandy at a gulp. 'I'm not used to it,' I told him. An' he could see it was the truth.

"An' Jake, it wasn't a joke with her. She didn't think I wanted the stuff—an' what could I do?"

Brundage chuckled grimly.

There were many things that he could have done; but her eyes looked at him with dazzling eagerness, expecting approval—and she read it in his half-amused and part silly smile.

For her there was intoxication in the secret between them, in the joy of circumventing that irresistible uncle.

McGuire felt like a thirsty man who wakes from a dream of a cool bubbling spring under his lips; but he choked down all the water in the glass.

She smiled joyfully, furtively at him, and was confirmed in the belief that she had saved him from a disagreeable experience.

Gorvhalsen never paused in his tramping and turning about the room. He talked continually with an aggressive manner, hesitating at times to demand agreement with some statement or other and getting it; though McGuire, for his life, could not have told what he was affirming. He had his own thoughts, lots of them.

Gorvhalsen now and then gestured toward the buffet; and Eve, alert for the cue, would go quickly from her chair.

McGuire readily tired of pouring half-tumblers of water into himself; but Gorvhalsen said—

"Drink!"

There was in that command, if not a threat, at least the hint of almost brutal unpleasantness; and he was a little watchful to note the liquor's effect on McGuire. But later when he said, "By the —— beard, you carry it well," his approval was ungrudging.

A feverish blush came under McGuire's dark burned skin. Eve, shading her eyes from a lamp's glare, smiled beneath her two hands. She was very excited.

The noise of the near riot on deck came down to them through the raised skylights.

"Stay here," said Gorvhalsen, hurrying out, ever eager to be near trouble.

McGuire started to follow, but Eve laid a hand on his arm.

"Uncle David once frightened a young man until he drank water with a dash of camphor in it. He thought it was liquor and it made him stagger—Uncle David had told him it was gin. I just happened to remember and thought——"

She broke off, laughing shyly. McGuire smiled. She was wholly reassured.

There was bustling and shouting. Two shots were fired.

McGuire sprang to the door.

"Don't—don't go!" she cried with hands protestingly blocking the door. Then, "Wait—I am afraid."

Perhaps she was; but the statement was the old, old plea to detain the man.

"Of what?" asked McGuire, listening for something besides her answer.

"Of those men—their faces. You can do nothing."

"No—" listening. Quiet had followed. "No. But I could see what the others are doing."

"You won't go?"

He did not promise, but he did not go. They listened. The forecastle storm was over. Gorvhalsen came back and laughed contemptuously.

"Tried to kill the Chinamen. Don't blame them. But they won't fight, McGuire. A poor breed, those men out there. Insult the officers from the dark. Why don't they come up and fight? In this world a man has the right to take what he wants; and I despise cowards."

They had a supper in Gorvhalsen's room.

"Thought I was a gentleman—in bare feet," said McGuire to Brundage.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen came, quiet, pleasant; and Jeanne, freshly vivid and bold. Corydon's headache or feeling of injury toward McGuire kept him out of sight; but no one seemed to miss him.

Gorvhalsen must have despised him, too, as a poor breed of man.

Beyond treating Jeanne with a casual, family-like courtesy, no one of them appeared to notice her, though McGuire felt that she was unavoidable and embarrassing. Her boldly staring eyes made him keep his face from her.

She sang with Gorvhalsen at the piano.

"She has been a singer," Eve whispered. "On the stage."

Perhaps, he thought, it was having been on the stage that made them take her bold eyes and dress as something natural.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen often watched McGuire when he did not seem to be looking; but without approval or disapproval in her manner. She remembered him as the man who had taken Eve to the Hawaiian hills, of whom the consul had spoken with emphatic protest. Perhaps

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she knew, too, that Eve had never forgotten him.

When Jeanne left, it was without a word. She simply went out with a slight but apparent air of being offended. Gorvhalsen chuckled and looked with secret understanding at his wife; then at McGuire, scrutinizing him with new interest. It was a rare man indeed who did not give all of his attention to Jeanne.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen soon after excused herself and on her way glanced at Eve; but Eve gazed back at her requestfully and remained in the room.

Gradually Eve curled herself more and more snugly in the deep chair, and grew drowsy in spite of her wish to keep wide awake.

GORVHALSEN began to talk. He enjoyed talking, and stamped and turned about, his words running on and on. It was largely a matter of mood with him. One night he might have sent a distinguished guest out of his sight with some rude excuse. This night he treated a wastrel as a friend. On the morrow, likely as not, he would consider it an impertinence for McGuire to seem to remember the attention.

"Tell me," he said abruptly, pausing with a touch of more than physical weariness in his manner, "what do you think life is for, anyway? Say what you please. She is asleep. There's a flower, McGuire;" and waving a hand at the stern windows he added, "I like flowers."

He went on, forgetting his question:

"Jeanne—you can't help but notice Jeanne. Mrs. Gorvhalsen and I adopted her twenty years ago. A pretty pert little thing. Even then she knew she was beautiful. We couldn't keep her with us—paid other people to educate her. A bad job they made of it. McGuire, two men have blown their brains out on her door-step." He said it with horrible casualness. "An Italian tenor tried to kill her—that's why she's on the *Heraldr*—to get away from him. She's cold as a piece of frozen meat—" McGuire shuddered—"but loves to have men mad over her. It's a disease. Beautiful, isn't she?"

He asked it impersonally.

McGuire nodded and said, "Yes," but was looking at Eve, who slept with cheek against folded hands.

"She'll be a real woman, McGuire—that girl. Worth a world of the other kind. But that white-livered, prayer-maundering, knock-kneed Bobert—he's made an infidel of me; or would have if I hadn't been one already. If that's the way Heaven's favorites are rewarded, I prefer the devil's service. Eh? What do you say?"

McGuire said nothing. There was no need to speak.

Gorvhalsen did not pause for an answer:

"Maybe he has his visions, though. Who can tell? But look at me—look at me—a big antediluvian brute. Does anybody expect *me* to get into the same suit of morals that fits that young pious fool with no more blood in his veins than 's in a carrot? He's afraid of his own shadow. I hate a weak man—and a strong woman. I hate cripples, cowards, priests and sick people.

"You, McGuire, you're a crazy daredevil without sense enough to be afraid of a shark, and—and—" he faced McGuire impulsively and almost snarled the words— "and I would rather have had the chance and the courage to come up through the water straight for that big man-eater than be the author of all the —— books to my name!"

He stopped. A glare of sincerity almost like fury was in his black eyes.

"Yes," said McGuire, "but I'd rather 've written the books than have the nightmares that're comin' to me!"

Gorvhalsen reached out roughly and clapped his shoulder. The grip hurt. It seemed nearly to crush the shoulder.

"You are all right," he said approvingly. "Let us have a drink and go on deck. It's getting late. We'll go up and say something to excite Matt Ward."

Gorvhalsen strode across the room and returned with a glass and bottle of gin, placing them in McGuire's hands; then turned to the buffet to pour himself a tumbler of raw brandy.

The fumes of the open bottle came up to McGuire's face with the overpowering thrill of fresh blood to a tiger. He trembled from fingers to knees.

Eve stirred slightly but did not awaken. Her feet were drawn up into the chair; the crisp dainty blue skirt was folded and crumpled under her and the small toes of two little slippers peeped out. She half-reclined, peacefully. The trace of a sweet contented smile stayed on her lips, so she must have had pleasant dreams about her.

His hands shook. Much of the liquor fell to the thick carpet as he poured, and filled the air with stronger odors; but too, as he poured he was looking at her. She slept, untroubled.

He loved gin as the coward loves life. The glass came half-way to his lips and paused.

Not within the memory of those who knew him had McGuire, wastrel, beach-comber, resisted an impulse; but then with slow dazed stiff walk like an unwilling man in a trance, holding his hands before him—one grasping the filled glass and one the bottle—he went across the room and fumblingly returned both to the table.

"Had enough, eh?" said Gorvhalsen, grinning.

"Yes—enough."

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He stumbled in turning around as he said it. Gorvhalsen laughed in soft chuckles.

"Go turn in, my boy. It is not every fellow that knows when to quit;" and he poured himself another deep drink.

"Turn in—yes," McGuire mumbled and unsteadily made for the door, his hands out reaching, his head down.

"— an' Jake, Jake!"

McGuire's voice was tense, low, strained; its sincerity reached and disturbed the cold heart of Brundage as he heard the cry of a muffled voice—

"May God forgive me—forgive me!"

"What—why—why—" Brundage's hand touched him.

"Jake—I love her—*her!*"

And McGuire laughed drunkenly, staggering as he moved.

XXIX

THE wind died out of the *Heraldr's* sails around noon the next day and mercurial curses ran fore and aft.

The crew didn't know where it was or where it was going or anything about themselves except that they were all being boiled and fried, hazed, kept hungry and abused—or thought they were. They had not the least idea of the ship's position except that it was undoubtedly in the doldrums.

McGuire, seeing the plume of black smoke now in the misty distance off the starboard beam, knew they were making for the *Mariana's* grave. He had thought that the *Heraldr* would first lay a course for Asoara and try to take Williams.

That was why he and Brundage had come on her.

How that half-idiotic Finn had managed to get the position was more than he had ever been able to imagine; but had he known that the *Heraldr* was sailing with only notations on a scrap of almanac-leaf to seek the *Mariana* herself, he would have remained at Honolulu and smiled drowsily as she put to sea.

Old Tom pulled at his scanty chin-beard and chewed with nervous waggling of jaw. He looked about the ocean and sky in all directions.

They had, he said, just run from one calm to another. He knowed the signs, he did. They was bad.

There were plenty of sharks, too. Something had attracted a swarm of them. They lay under the ship, vanished out to sea, reappeared, leisurely, patiently staring upward with eyes too cruelly intelligent for the comfort of imaginative people.

Men bantered McGuire good-naturedly, urging him to go over.

"Like to throw that Gor'lsen an' cap'n over," a voice muttered.

"Aye," said many voices, answering.

Sam-O and Clobb looked at each other.

"Le's throw Monty hover an' see 'f his charm 's hany good," Dicer squawked.

The sinister Frenchman faced about, a hand slipped to the crucifix and another to his knife. The earrings tinkled warningly.

McGuire knew how Monty had come by that precious cross, worthy of an abbot's breast. He had got the story out of Monty by sympathetic attentiveness as he got almost everything out of people.

There had been a shipwreck. Three persons got away: Monty, another man and a woman. The man died. There was little water and less food in the boat. Monty pretended to share the water spoonful for spoonful; but it was only a pretense. She was a woman old enough to have been his mother, a Frenchwoman, quiet, uncomplaining and deeply religious.

One afternoon Monty awoke, a cup of water to his mouth. She thought that he had fainted, and was generous, ready to give all to save him. He had been cheating her. His tears came emotionally as he confessed to her. Monty continued the pretense of sharing spoonful for spoonful with her; but for two days more he did not touch a drop of water.

A British frigate picked them up. He was half-crazed; but the British doctor said if she had got a drop of water less she would not have survived.

Later a crucifix was given to Monty. It came to him in a hospital at Marseilles, a real hospital where she had placed him. Also she had sent the crucifix by one of her sons to Monty's village and had it blessed by the old priest who had baptized him. He had worn it ever since. It was a part of his life. It protected him. Whenever there was a storm, always he prayed before it—and see, he had passed through many!

But that was not all. The fine old woman, when she died, left a part of her fortune to a convent in Monty's village. He was proud of that. It was because of him.

McGuire listened and nodded gravely. He understood. He really did, though he knew very well that Monty was as bad and perhaps more dangerous than any man in the forecastle.

When Dicer questioned the value of the "charm," as he called it, Sam-O gave him a back-handed sweep, knocking him over.

Sam-O, Shring, Clobb and Monty, no matter what quarrels had been between them, were friends now and often had their heads close together.

It was hot. The sea had a glaring sheen that hurt the eyes.

A boom was run out and water continually hoisted and thrown about the deck to keep the pitch from crawling clear out of the seams.

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The men were waspish. The Chinamen had got revenge by pretending that the galley had been wrecked and sent forward greasy canned stuff and nothing else.

Canvas flapped dispirited as the ship stirred on ground swells. It was very hot, as hot as the heat of the sun and the mirror of the sea could made it.

Juggins's hoarse voice bellowed with an effort at heartiness. Now and then he would snatch a scrubbing-brush from some man and show him how to use it, putting a great amount of energy into the work; but all he got even from the half-breeds was a sullen obedience; scarcely obedience at all, for they were deliberately exasperating—not quite at the point of refusing duty, but openly soldiering.

Matt Ward was on the poop, but he seemed to have lost all interest in the crew.

Dicer talked saucily to the boatswain—from behind Clobb's back. When Juggins looked toward the venomous little scrawny cheat he met Clobb's smoldering discolored eye. One eye was blinded by swelling and the torn eyebrow, and Clobb wore a strip of a black shirt around his head. He had no love for the little gambling-house rat, but had only hate for Juggins.

The big negro and Clobb managed to pass many times, muttered and went on without seeming to have spoken. Clobb was far from having been tamed.

Shring reported himself sick and refused to leave his bunk. Adams came forward, looked at him, asked if he was willing to work. Shring said that he was, but couldn't. The mate cursed him, but went aft without leaving orders of any kind. Shring grinned knowingly, exposing the broken black teeth through his ragged beard.

"I'm sick o' this hooker," he said to the forecastle; and men grinned back at him approvingly.

McGuire was lazily slushing canvas buckets of water across the main deck and a group of men with brushes wearily pushed them about.

A few loafed aloft. Some were on the forecastle with Swanson doing something to the fish-davit.

McGuire had his trousers rolled high and managed to spill much of the water on himself. Others near him liked the feel of the sizzling creamy water on their feet and slapped about in it lazily.

White frost-like brine, left by the rapid evaporation, appeared wherever the wood was not kept moistened.

The cabin must have been suffocating; but none of the women were under the awning. Matt Ward was there. Gorvhalsen stamped about, exercising. Adams kept an eye on some fellows who were taking the wrinkles off the awning which had been sloppily set.

Dicer, nursing a brush-handle inactively, whined a loud complaint for the benefit of ears on the poop. He used a humble, shrill abused voice that lamented the hunger and thirst that had come on the crew. The voice grew monotonous. Fellows about him said, "Shut up!" but Dicer whined the louder.

Gorvhalsen went below.

He was no sooner out of sight than Dicer began shrilly to abuse him. The curious little wretch had an audacious understanding of human nature. He knew Ward and Adams disliked the big owner and that they could not help but overhear though they paid no attention to him.

"OH, DICER!" McGuire called, weary of the voice.

He looked around perkily and two gallons of salt water streamed into his face, into his mouth, stranglingly, almost knocking him over.

Laughter went up. Dicer spluttered and squawked. He tried to appear to be dying. Men jeered him, but the jeers were cut short.

"Put that man in irons!" Ward bellowed, an arm leveled toward McGuire.

Astonishment touched the crew. Irons for a little sky-larking among themselves when every other sort of laxity was being ignored! It made them ill-tempered; that is, it was another excuse to be more ill-tempered. They needed only slight ones.

McGuire knew that he was paying for the night before—for having been Gorvhalsen's guest.

He tossed his emptied bucket at a scupperway and idly stepped forward to await the irons.

Adams went below and returned with short iron-lengths that rattled and clinked as he swung them carelessly. He came off the poop, gave them to Juggins and stood by watching while the boatswain slipped them on to McGuire.

Brundage looked grimly from across the deck, his wrinkled face mask-like, evilly set; and his eyes repeatedly shifted from McGuire to Dicer.

Dicer talked loud. That was the way, he said, when a fellow tried to do his work well, somebody made trouble for him. McGuire was a dirty loafer anyway. He'd fix 'em; he would.

Sam-O waited until Ward's back was turned, then smote Dicer heartily in the rear with the butt of a brush, and the little scrawny fellow screeched from real pain; but on catching sight of the negro's face grew suddenly quiet and worked away in silence.

Adams saw and no doubt approved of the blow. He said nothing. Ward had wheeled at Dicer's outcry and came to the poop rail, but only glanced about.

"Where 'll hu 'ave 'im put, sir?" Juggins asked.

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"Any place—out of sight," Adams answered carelessly.

Juggins started forward, a hand on McGuire's arm. McGuire smiled unconcerned, saying that he needed a rest.

Clobb moved so as to cross their path. He whispered hoarsely, for Juggins' ears, too—

"You won't be in 'em long, son—not long."

Juggins looked up into an insolent challenge on Clobb's battered face. The boatswain did not accept it.

"Huh," said Clobb insultingly as they passed on.

McGuire was chained to the carpenter's workbench.

Chips whined in lamenting protest, but Juggins invited him to go jump "hoverboard."

Chips went grumbling to the cabin to finish his work with the shelving.

Juggins said that he wouldn't put a dog under a hatch on a day like this; besides, he didn't think the captain would keep him in irons long. The captain, he said, wasn't a bad fellow except when he was drunk.

The afternoon wore on. McGuire experimented with numerous positions and at last, finding one that was reasonably comfortable, sleepily meditated.

No one came near him. He could hear the men's indistinct voices at times and men were often passing and repassing. He knew some hours later by the clatter of voices and creaking that the yards were being hauled around, so a wind must have come up.

Suddenly he grew tense, straining. He jerked at the irons, then would pause to listen. There were cries, roars, shrieks, rushing of feet, thumping, yells, the bawling of fierce voices. The noise increased. The men were loose. The crew had mutinied.

The door opened and Brundage unhurriedly came in. He had a key in his hand and there was a red smear on key and hand.

McGuire questioned him rapidly. Brundage answered without haste, mechanically. All of his attention was on the key and locks. Adams was dead; Swanson, too, he thought; the crew was rushing the poop—Matt Ward would pay: and Gorvhalsen. Clobb killed Adams.

Then as the irons fell:

"Quick, boy, quick—they want the women—it started over that red one. Blast her soul!"

XXX

IT HAD been time for supper, but all hands were kept on deck, pulling at the braces, tugging, heaving the great yard around, though there was not a hair's-weight breath of wind.

Adams was angry and the crew were paying. The faintest of ripples had stirred the water and Adams had let it pass without an order. But Matt Ward happened to come out of the companion at that moment, and bawled at him, wanting to know what kind of a mate he thought he was.

That the breeze had not been enough to fill a Dutchman's cap and lasted no longer than a match burns made no difference to Matt Ward, who seemed after any kind of a chance to row the mate, and made the most of it.

He went below again unsteadily.

So Adams in a stormy mood set the crew boxhauling in a dead calm. That was one way of punishing them for grinning at him.

The hazing went on and on. Adams, right down among the men, cursed and struck. He was in a mood for a fight and something about his mood kept the men from striking back.

Jeanne came up and leaned watchfully over the rail. She wore a vivid dress of purple and black; a brilliant pin glittered on the left of her breast. Her bright-red hair flared in bushy curls. She was a beautiful creature and knew it; just then she was fascinated by the racket and cries and blows beneath her.

Some man said venomonously in an undertone—

"There's that woman—he'll show off now."

Adams, unexpectedly near, smote the fellow on the base of the head from behind; and Clobb, without a second's pause, crashed a pin he had been carrying inside of his shirt on the back of the mate's skull.

The mutiny was on.

Adams was dead before he fell, but Clobb bent over and pounded his skull to fragments.

Sam-O, as if he had been waiting for a signal, drove his knife into the barrel-like body of Juggins, who had stood shocked to a moment's inaction by the blow of the mate.

The plot had been well laid: Swanson was on the top-gallant forecastle and without a chance to defend himself. Before he knew what was up he had been thrown overboard with a knife sticking into his back. His terrible cry was choked by the water.

Juggins yelled, his face aft. He tried with the last of his life to warn his captain. A second blow from Sam-O ripped him between groin and ribs, and the boatswain tried to run and fell.

The big negro released all of his passion into his voice and face. The half-pleasant thick-featured negroid countenance seemed to have been a mask that fell away. His nose dilated, the thick lips curled back quivering and his eyes, widened by excited rage, exposed a blood-shot white area that gave the face a startling aspect. He yelled, scarcely forming words, but communicating his frenzy to other men—and threatening them.

Jeanne, alone on the poop, stared. She did not move. She could not cry out.

Not all were in the plot. Not all would

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have been daring enough to have been in it, though there was none that had mercy for Ward. Men to whom the attack was unexpected looked about uneasily.

"I knowed it!"

Old Tom called shrilly, though he had known nothing about it; but he knew what he meant. The *Heraldr* officers had been asking for trouble and it had come.

Dicer with the instinct suggested by his vulturing thin face swooped at Adams' body, his nimble gambler's fingers going into the pockets. Brundage's hand closed on his arm—

"That key!"

The cold sudden voice frightened Dicer so that he jerked to get away, spilling the loot.

"That 's just what Hi 'us hafter!" he whined.

Brundage picked out the key from the gore it lay in. Dicer hastily regathered the scattered trinkets and loose money.

Men were tensely gaping; they stood in distorted attitudes, surprized, confused, dazed, thick-witted at best. Men are seldom warmed into excitement in a moment and the mutiny came unexpectedly to most of them.

The ringleaders roared, cursing, trying to tell in tumbled words what fools they were to have stood the *Heraldr* so long; bawled, "We're all in this!" and raised a mad babble of oaths, pleas, threats and promises.

Sam-O was in a frenzy. Primal savagery was perhaps a very little closer to his skin than in the other men. It showed itself a little more readily. He bellowed fearful things, brandishing his knife; then yelling something about "white men" he killed one of the Kanakas that had started forward as though running away. The native had been going toward Brundage and McGuire, just emerging from the carpenter-shop. The warning reached every man who saw the negro bound on to the Kanaka's back, encircle him with a python-like arm and draw a knife across his throat.

Clobb bawled hoarsely. He caught a man that edged frightenedly from him by the hair, yanked him face to the poop and kicked him; then, half-crouching, extended an arm toward Jeanne and cried—

"Him that gets her—keeps 'er!"

Scattered cheers answered that.

GORVHALSEN appeared on the poop. His huge body swayed in awkward hurry. His head was bare, his coat off, and the massive beard blotted out the front of his white silk shirt. Before he saw the bloody work that had been done he shouted derisively—

"What's the racket now?"

Yells went at him. Men who had been dully staring came to life.

Jeanne too broke through her daze. She turned away, an arm pointing behind her toward the body of the mate. She was answering with a gesture Gorvhalsen's question.

He had already seen. His yelled curse, its roar, its tone, its insult, filled some men with dread. Rage seemed to swell his enormous body, and the arms came away from his side, half-curved and partly extended as though to close them all in a mighty crushing grip. He came swaying challengingly to the starboard poop ladder.

"At him, men!" Clobb yelled and started.

But Sam-O passed in a bound and leaped the ladder; Clobb turned and headed for the port ladder where already men were scrambling.

The negro's mouth was fringed with foam. The rush of hot blood to his face gave the blackness a sheen and the white rows of fine teeth were visible like an animal's as it leaps to kill.

Gorvhalsen, confident, at once infuriated and cool, drew back and let the negro get clear on to the poop. Their bodies met like the shock of bulls. Sam-O slashed with the knife, then his arm was caught, his body gripped crushingly; and over and down the negro's back Gorvhalsen twisted and pulled the arm till there was snap and crunching of broken bone. Sam-O had slashed and cut and paid for it out of his own broken bone and muscle. He writhed in the embrace, helplessly.

Gorvhalsen swayed the negro clear from his feet, lifted him, carried him, raised him and lurching forward let him go head-first and backward down the ladder.

Gorvhalsen straightened up. He was bleeding and gashed; he looked down into the waist and laughed. He must have felt that the duel was decisive, that these low-bred brutes would slink off as they had done the night before. He glared down in triumphant mockery, laughter flying through his beard.

But Jeanne screamed.

Four men had leaped the port-ladder and were grappling among themselves for her. Clobb was beating the other three off when he saw the negro had been thrown away. He left them and rushed Gorvhalsen, who met him, fist to jaw. The other three in blinding woman-hunger closed on Jeanne.

Clobb went backward and down, dazed by the two blows, the second of his head against the deck. The knife dropped from his hand, clattering, and fell from the poop.

Gorvhalsen turned on the three who had paused for Jeanne, ravishingly. If they had thought at all, it was that Sam-O and Clobb would win the deck for them, and their fight was between themselves for the woman.

Shring's arms were about her. And not feeling the blows of his fellows, his face with his lips back breathlessly over the dirty broken teeth pressed to meet her own as though a kiss would give him ownership.

Gorvhalsen roared and struck with fingers

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spread claw-like. His strength was great. One man was jerked backward and thrust down to meet Gorvhalsen's upraised knee, then fell with a snapped neck. Another, called Janz, dropped from the group, afraid, untouched, and crawled toward the shelter of a skylight.

Bodily, by hair and belt, Gorvhalsen lifted Shring head-high and threw him to the deck.

Jeanne fled, sobbing as if still being strangled, and half-falling into the companionway to rush below, she stumbled against Matt Ward who was coming up with a revolver in each hand. She was covering her face with her arms as she went below, trying to shut out what her eyes had just seen and her flesh still felt—her bold eyes were for once averted.

Ward looked hard at her. He was half-drunk, but passed without a word. He too had found her bizarre beauty irresistible; but either from a latent decency or timidity had not done anything more than be angry toward his mates for the attention they had from her.

Before his feet were over the coaming he fired across the top of the port ladder, killing a man; and the knowledge that firearms were being used checked the crew for a moment, but increased their desperation.

Monty had rushed for the cabin door, but a shot came through it and he leaped to one side.

Clobb had crawled to the break of the poop and dropped below; but did not pause. The ship had to be taken over or he would dangle by his neck from a yard-arm. He may not have thought of that, probably did not. He was merely an angry, desperate, cruel man, carrying the fight to people whom he did not think could stand against the crew; the reward was to be the privilege of doing as the men pleased, as they drunkenly pleased.

Ward knew that this was mutiny, real and deadly; something savage within him welcomed it and the right to kill. There was no pause and no parley. Shouts and curses with men jostling and scrambling, were everywhere. Some were breaking into the galley. Some crouched on the ladders, others lurked under the break of the poop. A few inactively watched.

Sam-O, after lying bent and crumpled, came to his knees, stood up unsteadily, shook himself, fingered his broken arm curiously, then jabbering curses, stealthily crawled up the starboard ladder, at the top of which Clobb already crouched. Together they watched Janz, who had dropped to the deck when Gorvhalsen turned on the three men about Jeanne.

JANZ had crept to the skylight. He was taking out an ax stowed in a case there. His movements were concealed from Matt Ward by the skylight itself.

Gorvhalsen was bending over Shring, ready to stamp out what trace of life might be left in him, and had looked up as Matt Ward shot.

He shouted hearteningly at the captain, turning toward him.

A moment later Gorvhalsen was struck in the back by the ax, and crumpled as he was trying to wheel around. Janz in excited haste had hit with the head of the ax instead of with the blade and Gorvhalsen took the blow just above the hips. Beaten down to less than half his height, helpless from the waist to his feet, he was as full of fight still as a wolf with a broken back.

Janz struck a second blow, aiming for the head—to split it. At the same time Clobb and Sam-O went on to the poop, yelling for the crew to follow. Ward shot rapidly.

Gorvhalsen snatched the descending ax from the man's hand, and the jerk of seizing it drew Janz almost off his feet and so close that Gorvhalsen grabbed an ankle, tripped and pulled him near, then chopped into his head with the ax-blade which he used like a chisel.

Ward shot right and left. His aim was poor, but the bullets flew alarmingly.

Finding themselves unsupported in the rush, Sam-O leaped off the poop; and Clobb dodged down on to the quarter-deck, making for the cabin door; but a bullet came through as he opened it.

Monty, sheltered beside the door, laughed as Clobb jumped back. A moment before he had jumped in the same way too. Clobb peered through a window, and Corydon awkwardly pointed a gun at him. He ducked again, cursing.

Corydon scarcely knew what bullets were like, but he was using his uncle's revolver.

Chips was jumping about in the cabin with no idea of what to do or what he was doing, but whined shrilly that they would all be murdered. He was too frightened to remember that the small-arms locker was in the captain's stateroom, or to make use of it if he did remember. The petty officers had turned in their guns the night before after the galley trouble quieted.

When the mutiny started, Chips had stared out on deck until his distended eyes were almost protruding. When he saw the men rush toward the cabin door, he had started to run for the stairway. But Corydon shot.

Gorvhalsen had been in his stateroom; and at the first yells he went bounding out. His wife met and tried to beg him not to go.

Corydon began to follow, but Mrs. Gorvhalsen called him.

"They are killing men," she said.

Her face was white as the lace about her throat, but she did not seem excited. Eve ran to her brother, clung to him, saying that he must not go. The clamor on deck was terrifying.

Corydon had no clear idea of what he might do with his uncle's revolver; but he had bolted

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back into the stateroom and snatched it from a cabinet drawer. Eve had followed, and again clutched at his arm, begging him not to shoot.

He could hardly talk, and as he pulled away from her his voice had quavered brokenly—

"I—I don't—want—want—to hurt any—anybody—but—but—" and he stuck stubbornly at the "but."

He returned to the cabin with Eve behind him, and when he saw the door open, he shot.

Eve screamed and ran into Gorvhalsen's stateroom. She fell, half into a big chair, her knees on the floor and her arms tightly crossed before her face. Jeanne, too, rushed into that room. Somehow the girls must have felt that being there more nearly put them under Gorvhalsen's immediate protection.

If Corydon had been given time to think he would probably have said that he was frightened, for he trembled and cold sweat was all over him. His jaw quivered as if he were half-frozen and a dizzying leaden sensation had settled in his stomach. He held the revolver in front of him with both hands as far as he could reach, shut his eyes tightly as he pulled the trigger and flinched at the noise of the shot. He shouted frantically—

"Don't come in here—don't come in here—" over and over, not knowing what he said.

The noise of terrible voices grew. The crew was becoming as drunken with blood-excitement as if rum were overflowing into scupperways. They were hard men. They had been galled and hazed. The lives of most of them were worth nothing more than two fathoms of hemp if they did not take over the ship.

The shooting on the deck above continued. Sound of the guns and Ward's curses came through the skylight. There were blows and falling glass as men broke the windows looking into the cabin from the quarter-deck and things were thrown through. Wild daring faces peered in, shrieking threats at Corydon, who unsteadily pointed a revolver toward them, but did not shoot for the faces would vanish—then reappear.

MRS. GORVHALSEN stood in the door of the room where the carpenter had been working. She held her hands tightly together like one who suffers intense pain without crying out. Her face was strained, haggard. Age seemed to have drawn, of a sudden, heavy lines there. She said, "Oh, my ——," once, and it was like the beginning of a prayer. It may have been, but she did not close her eyes.

Then she shrieked. Everything that terror and a broken heart puts into the voice was in her cry. It rose piercingly above the shouting and yells, the pounding and Matt Ward's guns.

Jeanne heard and frightenedly slammed shut the door of the stateroom, bolting it. Her face had the crazed look of fear. She thought the men had rushed into the cabin; she screamed and tore at Eve, who tried to get out.

The isolation of the closed door terrified Eve. She wanted to be near her aunt, uncle, brother. They fought, each struggling as if for the life of the other. Eve was also frightened by Jeanne's mad face; but her strength was not equal to Jeanne's, which had the terror of Shring's arms and kiss to help.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen as she cried had run across the cabin to where Gorvhalsen was coming down the stairs with lifeless body dragging behind him. He crawled like a monstrous human-headed lizard—as a dog crawls when its back is broken.

Chips, meeting him on the steps, was retreating slowly, stupidly staring and asking monotonously what was the matter.

Gorvhalsen did appear unreal and was frightfully grotesque. His white shirt was blotched and splattered with blood. His long beard swept the stairs, and the deep black eyes glowed from pain, rage, the baffled passions of a strong man made helpless. He snarled at the carpenter to get from his way.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen tried to lift him and cried in pleading reproach at Chips—

"Help—help him!"

Chips bent awkwardly.

"Get 'way, both of you," Gorvhalsen muttered in a voice of pain.

"David!" She was trying to raise him.

"Let me alone. My back—hurt."

Mrs. Gorvhalsen lifted her face for a moment as though questioning God for having been heedless to her prayers; but instantly bent again to put her hands to him.

Corydon, flinching as before, shot at the door.

He was jeered savagely by men he could not see. Dicer's shrill voice rose loudest through the broken windows: he was crouching below.

Gorvhalsen swayed his head to one side and raising himself as high as he could on his arms, looked long at Corydon. It was not possible to know what he thought, for he said nothing, but stared at the boy, just stared, expressionless. Then he began crawling heavily across the cabin deck.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen tugged to help, bending low over him; but her delicate hands were as futile on his big body as if trying to grip a wounded horse by the shoulder and help it.

Corydon saw him; but the boy was already too shocked and strained to feel more emotion. He gazed dully at Gorvhalsen, then hastily pointed his revolver toward the door again but did not shoot.

Faces were peering in through the windows with wonder on them to see Gorvhalsen's huge body broken; but there was no lull, no quiet.

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The men who had smashed into the galley to get at the butcher-knives and cleavers were torturing the Chinamen—the yellow-bellies; and shrill screams went up. The steward, in the galley to see about the evening meal for the cabin, had been killed promptly.

Gorvhalsen fell over on his side. He said to her:

"Go there—lock the door. When the lock breaks you must——"

She would hear nothing more.

"I will stay," she said, and meant that she would not leave him.

Her voice was not agitated, but low, steady. Her slender delicate hands were pressed against his head.

He looked slowly about. Blood tricked on his mouth from biting his lips. He lay on a forearm; his big hands opened and closed, the fingers writhing, perhaps around imaginary necks. He too was unagitated, even thoughtful; but there was great pain in his eyes, and ever and ever they fell on Corydon, staring at him blankly as though not quite sure that it was Corydon.

THERE was sudden trampling of feet overhead. Matt Ward was no longer shooting. He had emptied his guns and he would not turn, run, try to get away, but snatched up the ax. The shadows of bodies moving fell on the skylight. Men were crowding on to the poop. A new note was in their yells.

Gorvhalsen asked where the girls were, but his question was unnoticed. On that instant the yelling stopped and the abrupt silence struck those in the cabin into attitudes of strained listening suspense.

The silence ended with the heavy thud of a fallen body. The men had thrown Matt Ward clear from the poop, swinging him over the rail by feet and arms as a sack of wheat is flung from pier to lighter.

He had died fighting. Some of the fellows jumped on the body, or kicked it, saying what they thought of him. He was dead before they flung him, but the dead body was abused and talked to cursingly. They had worked themselves into a blood-passion and loosened the savagery never deeply concealed.

Faces peered down the skylight and feet rushed on the companion. A grinning Portuguese stuck one of Matt Ward's revolvers against the skylight. Chips fearfully ducked and cried for Corydon to shoot. The Portuguese was having a little joke. The gun was empty. He vanished as Corydon lifted the revolver; and he did shoot at the stairs, checking the rush there.

Gorvhalsen, slowly turning his head, said—

"We must get from here."

Chips looked about to find a hole that would hide him and whined that the locks wouldn't hold.

"Nail the door," said Corydon, his voice thin and high. He spoke without looking around.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen was stooping low to her husband's head and talking quietly. She must have known how to move the impulses in that great wild body else life would hardly have been endurable for her those many years she had loved and been with him.

He crawled for the open door of the nearest stateroom, the one where the carpenter had been at work, and she kept by his side, bending over, trying to help him, not even looking behind her though the crew were yelling, pounding deck and bulkheads and throwing things.

Chips crowded in after them, and Corydon backed toward the door, too. The men were afraid of his revolver, but more and more boldly so as to confuse him, they feinted to rush in. Missiles came through the broken windows. The yelling was turned directly at him; and some men jeered and said the evilest things they knew.

"We'll catch 'im 'fore he gets in there!" a voice screamed, hoping to make the boy turn and run.

But Corydon was stubborn. He stopped, looking about with the revolver extended in his two hands.

A belaying-pin struck him in the face. He reeled, stumblingly.

"They killed 'im!" Chips howled and banged shut the door, leaving the boy alone to face the crew.

Corydon was dazed, but the sound of the closing door struck one thought in his consciousness—

"Nail—nail—" he shouted confusedly, crying to the carpenter who could not hear him, for the cabin was in an uproar.

From the stairs and quarterdeck men rushed. There was pounding behind the closed door. Chips, half-crazed by fear, was driving nails into it.

Men, especially those behind the leaders, yelled as loudly as they could, pressing forward.

Corydon shot. The bullet went into the deck almost in front of him, but slowed the rush for an instant. He was screaming hysterically—

"Nail door—nail—nail—don't let—nail—nail—nail!"

His words could not be understood; even his voice could not be recognized behind the door where the pounding went on.

Men were surging across the cabin. Those safely behind pressed hard against those in front. The negro with an arm dangling loose came on. Clobb too; French Monty sneaked from the side, crouching, ready to spring. Twenty others were behind them.

Corydon shot again, and a fellow well to the back of the crowd was found by the poorly aimed bullet.

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The boy tried to shoot once more as he cried for nails in the door, but the trigger clicked. He threw the emptied gun awkwardly, harmlessly as a girl would have thrown it, and put up his hands in a futile way, his fingers outspread as if to scratch. He knew nothing of blows and knotted fists.

Clobb struck with a cleaver at the helpless boy's shoulder and neck; and scarcely paused, but wheeled and lunged against the door of the stateroom where through the after skylight the girls had been seen.

He bucked it twice; then he and Sam-O together threw their bodies against the lock, and Monty pressed beside them. But the lock held.

Clobb stood back and chopped fiercely. The door was made of oak.

Men huddled about, eager, talking loud. Some beat against the nailed door, shouting threats. Others, most of the others, were already looting the pantry and unlocked rooms, plundering everything, decorating themselves.

McGuire stooped to Corydon. The boy was dying, unconscious. He recognized nothing, but his lips were trying to move. McGuire laid his ear low to them. The faintest of whispers—

"Nail—na—" and the lips were still.

He had given his life for the man he feared and hated.

There was a rush of bodies against the door where Clobb had chopped; a chorus of howls—splintering and crashing. The door gave way. The men rushed through.

XXXI

ALL through the night light winds rose and fell. A half-hour's breeze would come, veer, pass away; and the *Heraldr*, having flapped aback with the wheel spinning this way and that, rode sluggishly.

Out to the north a blunt fire-tipped cone burned like a large red misshapen star.

Few of the mutineers went on deck at all, unless they staggered there, scarcely knowing what they were about; maybe wanting a little fresh air, and getting knocked unconscious by it.

When the door had given way the men crowded rushingly through.

Already many of them were decorated with loot from the staterooms, into which they had swarmed, fiercely eager to get their hands on anything that had belonged to some one else; and what they did not want they marred and tore.

Jeweled trinkets of the women were snatched, fastened on to shirts. Toilet stuffs were flung in mirth over fellows who had their backs turned. Jeanne's powder was sprinkled on bearded faces. Ribbons and strips torn from her dresses were bound around heads and waists. Hard men love bright colors.

Already, too, some had broken into the arms-locker and revolvers were stuck into belts made of torn gowns. Cutlases were seized, carried or worn with much swaggering. Something of good-natured savagery settled on the men. They were ridiculously like children that have raided a garret and found old horse-pistols, swords and tarnished gilt trappings of martial grandfathers.

They did not fear an attack from anywhere; but arms to fighting men are ornaments, and fighting men prize ornaments as the gold and gilt, the ribbons and polished metals, plumes and shakos, braid, feathers, bright buttons, varnished leather and gaudy little medals have indicated from the beginning of armies.

Old Tom and Benny had kept side by side through the fight, pressing close, looking hard, excited, but taking no part in the blows.

Brundage looked watchfully at them with thoughts of his own turning over slowly at the back of his head; but they had no sooner smelled whisky in Matt Ward's room than Old Tom jerked the upturned bottle from a fellow's bearded mouth and put it to his own.

Brundage, staring through the doorway over the heads of men, turned away when he saw that. The Yankee whalers would soon be drunk and of no use in seizing the ship from the mutineers and running her straight for the volcanic beacon light.

A man known as the Crab because of his sidling gait and stooped shoulders came rushing out of Ward's room in a hurry to be everywhere, miss nothing. He had a cutlas in one hand and an emptied bottle in the other; and bumping into Brundage, drew back the cutlas to strike before seeing who it was.

"Give hit 'im!" Dicer yelled at the Crab.

But the Crab grinned his lack of a wish for a fight as he looked squarely into Brundage's black cold eyes.

Brundage turned away; nor did he look back though he caught Dicer's whisper to the Crab—

"Hi 'd 'a' cut 'is blasted 'ead hoff f'r 'im!"

AS THE door of Gorvhalsen's stateroom had opened, Sam-O, then Clobb, were the first in. French Monty leaped through with a yell. Others pressed at their backs. The voices of many were unloosened again.

Eve lay huddled down on the floor as if dead. In the calm the *Heraldr* had got her stern to the west, and the sun just ready to fall to the horizon-line sent yellow light through the open windows, covering her and the carpet about her with radiance as if to mark one favored of Heaven. Had she not been unconscious she might have sought death in a frantic heedless leap through the stern windows, preferring the vengeance of God rather than the mercy of men. Her little face was peacefully bloodless

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with the soft repose of a death-like sleep upon it; and the blonde wisps lay like delicate traceries over her forehead and cheek.

Monty sprang to where she lay, and stood over her, a foot on each side of her body. He was armed in each hand, and every man who came near risked being sliced.

All the while that the men had beaten on the door Jeanne stood by the little cabinet. She was motionless with hand extended toward a cluster of small bottles; her hand was poised there ready to seize on one that would give her courage to face what would come if the door's lock did not hold.

She loved life and wanted it; for life had been sweet to her with comfort and luxury, too; and scarcely a man of all she knew indifferent to her beauty. She stood as if waiting a signal, tense, desperate, afraid of everything, hesitant between a choice of cruel terrors, and her quietness was not calm, but the rigidity of fear.

With her eyes at the door against which the hard blows fell, she seemed to be gazing at a basilisk, turned into stone and could not move. Her purple waist was torn; the silken whiteness underneath showed through; and with lips apart, half to scream and half for frantic breath, she waited, feeling that something must happen as something had always happened to protect her.

Suddenly the hot black face of the negro was there across the room. She caught the blurr of other forms and faces; and something swifter than thought touched her with relief that it was not Shring rushing at her with dirty beard and broken teeth.

She clutched among the bottles, her fingers striking and overturning the one she wanted. It seemed trying to evade her. The flush of panic swept her and she tried to cry out but could only gasp and snatch for it as for something dearer than life.

The bottle was in her hand, her fingers were at the cork—a sense of darkness, of being pressed to death came to her, suffocating. The rushing men were that close.

As she flung the glass to her lips and swallowed stranglingly—they caught her.

For a moment she was shaken this way and that like a doll in the mouth of dogs. Her waist was ripped from the shoulders, the silken things below it were torn away and the fair white flesh was given to the eyes of the men.

Scream upon scream fled Jeanne's mouth. Terror and pain were at every nerve she had. Her lips were burned and swollen instantly and down from the side of her mouth where the liquid had spilled, a long red streak appeared. Her pain was that of pure fire. She did not care what they were doing with her, did not know; but writhed and struggled, shrieking madly, trying to clutch her own throat and stomach.

Sam-O fell away. He had a broken arm to begin with and Clobb when words and curses failed drove the flat of the cleaver alongside his head, knocking him back. The negro grunted hoarsely, staggering to a bulkhead with the gesture of shrinking from a second blow.

The woman was Clobb's. By the right of muscle and iron he had won her. A powerful arm gripped Jeanne close to him and the meat-cleaver swayed over his shoulder warningly. No one would challenge him. His lips were drawn back, the teeth glistened fang-like as a wolf's; the one eye gleamed from his swollen, bruised, battered face. Besides, he was their captain now.

Jeanne moaned in screams, twisting, struggling. She knew nothing except that she suffered.

Already the men were busy with looting the stateroom and feverishly drinking. The glass doors of the buffet had been kicked out the more easily to scramble among the bottles.

Clobb caught her up into both his arms and tried to soothe what he thought was her fright with gentleness. His voice was hoarse. She needn't be afraid of him. Why all the fuss? Hadn't she shown she liked him?

He had lifted and was holding her firmly. His arms were stronger than her convulsive death-agony. He put his mouth to her swollen, blackened, burned lips, and the odor and taste of acid stung.

A bewildered sense of being cheated wrote itself on his bruised face. He glared incredulous and angry and felt her body and legs stiffen quiveringly in his embrace. She was dead.

And when he realized what was done, he shivered. He was aghast with a kind of horror that made him fearful of having contested with Death for a woman's body; and flung her from him with a brute-like cry of fright.

Men turned and gaped, stupidly questioning.

Then Sam-O laughed, high, hard, mocking; but he waved a bottle friendlily at Clobb, who seized it, gulping, sucking at the glass mouth.

Men came and stared at her, said things, and turned away to drink. Their voices were thunderous in excited glee over capturing the *Heraldr;* they shrieked and yelped, clapped each other's backs and drank on.

Presently Dicer slipped forward with sly quick glances over his shoulder and snatched from among the rags into which the purple waist was torn the diamond pin she had worn over her heart. He thrust it into his pocket and scooted off, grinning.

XXXII

WHEN McGuire had come into the room Monty had both knife and cutlas out and was making dangerous swipes with the cutlas.

His shirt, rolled above the elbows, was open

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to the waist. The gold crucifix dangled and gleamed on his hair-covered breast as he stood, feet wide apart, looking quickly from side to side, his earrings jangling to the sharp splutter of oaths.

Nobody appeared to have much real wish to fight with him; for the prize was hardly worth blood when rum and gin, brandy, wine and liquors of many kinds were at hand. When the men were well drunk other things might follow.

In moments of license the attention of most men gravitates first to their stomachs; other passions are easily awakened when bellies are filled with hot drinks and heavy food. For every one that rushed at Jeanne, ten had sought out stuff to drink.

The men, drinking, or pausing with hands filled with something stolen, taunted and teased Monty. It was fun to hear him curse excitably.

Some among them may have felt sickened by what their fellows talked of; but growing drunk, they talked the same themselves.

There was futility, certain if not indeed violent failure, in one or two men trying forcibly to oppose anything the others wished. They were aroused, half-crazed by the stimulation of excitement and were ready to fight—were ready for anything but any kind of restraint.

They might yield to the fellow who forcibly appropriated a treasure unto himself, but they would have flared dangerously had any one suggested that no one among them should touch the treasure, the loot, the women.

A mad beast sleeps in every man, and not very soundly; and hard men that have no families behind them, no feared power above them, no laws to face in front of them, are not now much different from what men were when as animals they had no homes, no priests, no magistrates.

McGuire was for a time like a shocked specter at a bacchanal, helpless and apart. He knew the men about him far better than they knew themselves, and he was aware that nothing by way of force and certainly nothing by way of appeal could move them in the least except to resistance and anger. The half-smile was frozen on his face and the droop of his eyes in some subtle way changed until there was no sleepiness about it, but rather seemed to shelter a cruel and furtive meditation.

He knew that he was helpless to do anything more effective than get himself killed; and while he had no unusual urge at that time to shelter a life never greatly swaddled from danger, there was little of romantic audacity in his nature.

He was not a swordsman; he was not a knife-fighter; he was not even skilful with a gun; he had nothing of the sternness in his character that makes the leader and by a firm presence puts those about him in a mood for obedience.

True, flushed with rage, he had cried to Brundage—

"For ——'s sake I'll kill that dog!" when Sam-O had murdered the Kanaka; but Brundage had caught his arm, jerking him around.

Later McGuire had edged toward the cabin door through which Corydon was shooting. He hoped, somehow, to get in there. It would have been suicidal to try; the men he was leaving would have killed him as soon as they saw what he wanted to do. He would have tried, but Brundage had taken him by the neck, thrusting him back and muttering coldly:

"Wait. You can do nothing."

Now, also, he could do nothing. Brundage would not try. The two Kanakas were brave loyal boys in their own way, but they needed the talismanic presence of Hurricane Williams to fly at odds. Had Old Tom and Benny stayed sober—but they were shouting loudly, damning the *Heraldr*, praising the brandy.

And Eve was not dead; McGuire at first had thought that she too, had escaped that way; but she stirred, beginning to be aroused by either the faint wearing off or the noise and trampling about her.

He leaned against a tier of shelves that had a sort of combing to keep books from sliding off in the ships's roll. Men were tearing pages out of books, drunkily twisting them for pipe-lighters—for cigar-lighters, too. They had plundered the tins, breaking more of the cigars than they smoked.

Everything their fingers touched was destroyed, at least marred. Flower-pots by the stern windows were overturned, the earth and plants trampled underfoot. They banged the piano, one after another, or three and four once, thumping it with driving fists, grinning delightedly at the noise. Already they had broken into the ship's stores and were wolfing down tins of meat—or else not liking the first mouthful, flinging the can and all at the windows, sometimes splattering the bulkheads and carpet.

Clobb was talking in a loud voice. Men presssed around him, admiringly. They would get away with the *Heraldr* all right, he said. Let those people in the stateroom alone—till they got hungry. There would then be some tricks for that crippled ape-man to do. Laughter flatteringly answered him. Clobb had an affectionate arm about the negro; and Sam-O had his right arm in a sling. It would never be of use to him again.

Men were crowding back into the cabin where the table had been let down and laid with snowy crisp linen and silver. Some one had brought tin cups out of the forecastle and these were on the table too, beside thin-frosted water-glasses and tall-stemmed wine-glasses

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which were continually being knocked over. Hungry men would feast that night. Everything was going forward with raucous bustle. Portuguese had been sent to the galley for hot water. Each man would swim in rum punch.

IN THE stateroom men paused and passed before Monty, too busy with their own affairs to care about the treasure he was trying to save for himself. Always some stared at him curiously, mumbled or bantered.

He had lifted the unconscious girl into the chair where she now made low sounds and moved. His fierceness was dominating, particularly on men hysterically hilarious about other things. Often he would look down at her with a great deal of the expression in his face that artists have given to the devil. Monty's head was bound, as always, with red cloth knotted at the back. He had a sharp-pointed beard and bushy eyebrows. His tinkling circular earrings swayed low on the sides of his jaw. She had awakened out of her trance, looked at him and fainted again.

Clobb broke out in a fury. He snatched a leather-bound book from the Crab's mutilating hands and crashed him to the deck with a drive of fist that would have split a bulkhead; then kicked him again and again, cursing him.

The Crab, illiterate, had no doubt been attracted as a monkey to a gleam by the bright gilt lettering on the back of the morocco binding and had taken the book down and torn the pages from it to hold over the lamp chimney and get a light for his cigar.

But didn't the blasted Crab know it was—— luck to tear even a lettered corner from Holy Writ? The Crab did.

Nothing could be more ominous. A Bible might lie about in the toughest forecastle through a year's voyage. The men that read it would be respected—at least when they talked of what they read; and never a page of it would be desecrated lest a storm rise out of a calm night and put the ship on a reef that was never seen before and would never be found again.

Not a man saw the incident without sudden hush falling on him; but it soon passed in curses for the Crab, then merged into a babble of crude reassuring interpretation that as the Crab couldn't read and hadn't known what the book was, nothing dreadful could properly happen. So, soon, in laughter and song, roaring and drinking, the incident passed.

McGuire watched what was happening. He was cold. The stiffling stateroom and cabin crowded with hot bodies were suffocating. But he was cold; and he felt inert though cruel thoughts danced through his brain. He was sweating and chilled, at once half-mad and motionless. He tried to moisten his lips, but his tongue was dry. Men shouted at him merrily as they passed. It was a great day.

Suddenly he pushed into the grasping ring about a freshly brought basket of gin-bottles. He snatched one from a fellow's hand, struck the short neck dexterously against the edge of the buffet, breaking the glass neatly; and he drank.

It was not courage that he sought at the broken mouth of a square-face. He knew what he was about. He wanted his tongue loosened. Yet something that he did not understand and scarcely wished to resist had urged him not to drink, but that urge was less than the consuming passion burning in his veins.

As he flung the nearly emptied bottle carelessly past a man's head at the open window he pressed toward Clobb and caught at his shoulder.

Clobb turned with a scowl; but he had a liking for McGuire and his face and manner changed to heartiness and words burst into talk of how the *Heraldr* had been taken. He bid almost childishly for McGuire's praise.

"Brundage's a navigator," said McGuire. "Ought 'o shove him an' the instruments into some room an' keep these fellows out. Lots o' reefs round here."

The negro was listening thoughtfully. Clobb was in no mood to prepare for the morrow.

"Reefs—an' what Crab done," McGuire added.

Sam-O, second in command of the *Heraldr*, instantly declared the need of a navigator.

"An' Brundage don't drink—much," McGuire went on.

"Can't stay on my ship!" Clobb roared in humor, and laughter went up.

Dicer's perky face was thrust into the group—

"W'ats the row?"

"We're talkin' about using you for a jury rudder," said McGuire.

"None hof that. Hy'm ha hof'cer now. Hain't Hy, skipper? Hy throwed the pin what fetched that Corydon kid, didn't Hy, skipper?" To McGuire, "Ye wants to s'y 'sir' to me!"

McGuire slapped him in the face with one hand and pulled a knife with the other. Dicer retreated, shrieking threats, daring him to come, viciously cursing.

Clobb and Sam-O both put a hand on McGuire. There must, they said, be no blood let on the *Heraldr*; they were all good fellows and shipmates.

"Then keep that piece o' shark's gut away from me," said McGuire. And at once to Sam-O, "You can't swim much—that arm shivered—an' there are reefs!"

That settled it.

Brundage, much like the genii of Arabian fables, was hardly named before he was at hand

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and none had seen his coming. He then stood just inside the door, pipe in mouth, thumbs in belt. A cutlas dangled at his side.

They called to him. He came slowly, erect, with a grim composure that neither Clobb nor the negro liked; but he was dangerous if meddled with and they knew it. Besides, he was the only man among them that could navigate. They knew that, too. He nodded coldly to what was said.

McGuire spoke to Clobb:

"Captain, how'd it be pass the word they're to keep out o' the navigator's room?" To Brundage, "Pick a room nobody wants an' put the instruments in there—take Mrs. Gorvhalsen's room."

It fell in very well with Brundage's scheme of things to be navigator and direct the ship's course though he had no need of instruments just then to make for the harbor he wanted.

The three of them went into the cabin where most of the men had gathered in high glee, preparing for the banquet, though every man was already stuffed full of food and loaded to the scuppers with drink. Already, too, the snowy linen was stained with things spilled, marked with dirty hands, blotched with tobacco-ash, and had holes burned in it.

The sun had hurried down into the sea. All lamps were lighted. A breeze moved in wavering ripples across the flat water; but the *Heraldr* without anybody at the wheel slowly rifted around and around with no way on her.

McGUIRE went over to Monty and stood among the three or four that then idly gaped at him and the girl.

Monty's aggressive fierceness seemed to have served him as well as he wished; there was no indication that his wish to do first as he pleased would be seriously challenged, and he had shown the heedless purpose that has won heaven for even worse men when better employed.

His quick eyes, weeks before, had settled on the flower-like beauty of Eve. The utter innocence and sweetness of her stung fancies untouched by the more gaudy woman, and no sooner was he made a confidant in the plot to take over the ship than, come what might and die who must, he was hard-set that his would be the first arms to grasp her.

Eve, when she had been aroused and looked into his face, gasped inaudibly and fainted again. Monty, with an arm about her, having put down his cutlas, was trying to pour a half-glass of raw brandy between her lips. He spilled the whole of it on her face and breast and dress. The fumes struck her senses. As though trying to keep from consciousness she turned her head from side to side, instinctively evading something. Her hands groped in feeble defensiveness. She mumbled—

"Don't—don't—please—don't hurt me."

Monty threw the glass to the deck, stared at her a moment with an expression of helplessness and looked up questioningly a little bewildered at the men about him.

Then McGuire took a step forward.

"Monty?" he said in an enigmatically soft voice, a curious line of half-mocking, painfully forced amusement running across his mouth.

Monty was hesitantly watchful, puzzled, a little troubled. McGuire, as slowly and unagitatedly as one must be who approaches to stroke a dangerous animal, moved closer, holding Monty with eyes and smile.

His hand went out in a lazy movement and the fingers plucked the gold cross on Monty's breast, and it came up before his eyes, closed against them. And McGuire, grinning till his teeth showed in ironic savage mockery, moved the crucifix jiggingly back and forth right against Monty's face as in low-voiced jeering he cried:

"She's out of a convent, Monty. *Out of a convent!* Why don't you offer her this—this—*this!* Try her with it, Monty. Try her——"

Monty stared—his jaw hung brokenly—as if he had never before seen the little molded figure of ivory with dots of red stain at side, feet, hands and thorned brow, suspended on the cross of gold. His hands moved up slowly, stupidly toward it; but McGuire jerked fiercely and broke the strong cord that held it about Monty's neck.

"Get away—get away!" he jeered, pushing him carelessly, as Monty in dull trance-like gesture reached for it.

Monty, quickened, cursed and snatched at it; but McGuire, still grinning, gave a sudden shove so that Monty staggered back, recovering himself with hand to knife, drawing it.

But McGuire had leaned across to Eve. She, dazed, pale, sat weakly with hands pressed to cheeks; her wide blue eyes looked up piteously like the eyes of a gentle wounded creature. Her lips were wide apart as though to speak, but they did not move.

Silently he held the crucifix toward her, giving it to her. She could not at first realize that what she saw was true, but radiance grew within her eyes; for, vision or fact, it seemed a miraculous sign. She glanced from it to him, not quite sure. His hand moved closer; her arm stirred doubtfully.

She grasped it, touching his hand with fingers cold as though lifeless. Her wondering face was toward him, trustingly. The loud clatter and roar of many voices in harsh words and harsher laughter came through the door; the frequent sharp clash of broken glass, too. With the crucifix to her lips she bent over, weeping, huddled in the big chair.

"Now Monty, my son," said McGuire quickly, catching an arm through his, "let's have a drink."

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As if awakened out of a bad dream, Monty stared this way and that. Strange oaths rattled off his tongue.

"—knew all the time, Monty, you were keepin' these dogs away. But she—she was scared an' didn't understand till she saw ——"

The emotional Frenchman feverishly seized a bottle of cognac and appeared to be nearly strangling even before it reached his mouth.

XXXIII

THE gaping men who had seen were quickly mouthing the incident in the cabin. They excitedly declared that McGuire had taken the girl from French Monty, had frightened him off by jiggling the "charm." The crew, or most of them, came noisily streaming through the door to see, to jeer, to laugh, to have a little fun.

Dicer was at the corner of the table, rattling his box and casting with half-drunk fellows for their loot. He snatched up the little ivory cubes and hurried, squeezing and elbowing well to the front, his shrill voice going.

They came with drunken taunts for Monty. They rushed stumblingly in, curious, good-natured, loud, insulting—already after novelty.

They forgot why they came before they were well into the room. They had thought to find Monty and McGuire quarreling, but it meant nothing but a second's surprize to see that McGuire and Monty were drinking side by side from gin and brandy bottles.

As they had begun to come, McGuire, his imagination flaring, had been saying:

"—brother just got to heaven, Monty—in white-flame armor now, like a warrior saint. An' he's already plucked the sleeve o' God, and is pointin' right down here to the *Heraldr*. You an' me, Monty, we know the man that touches——"

His voice was drowned before he realized that the room was filling with men.

They wore bright torn clothes around their heads and waists. Sam-O had a yellow silken scarf for a belt. In his ears were glittering pendants from Jeanne's jewel-box. A half-breed of some kind had found them. Sam-O got them from him on the threat of taking ears and all if they were not yielded up as a gift. The Crab had tied pieces of ribbon in his beard. One fellow in merriment wore a woman's silken nightgown over his clothes. Clobb had Matt Ward's flat cap, no doubt as a sign of captaincy.

The Portuguese and half-breeds when they had thrown all the bodies overboard, having been kicked to that work by the lordly white men, got themselves well filled with hot rum so as not to be afraid and they had been so inspired with courage that they pulled off the dead whatever attracted their fancy. One of them wore Corydon's white blood-stained linen coat, probably because it had large pearl-shell buttons.

They grouped around Eve's chair, just circling there because they stared at her and were crowded by others who pushed in alongside, wanting to see too.

Tobacco-smoke soon clouded the lamps, giving an eery dimness to the room.

Monty tried to push through to be near her. He was so excited they thought he was going to make a fight of it, and was seized, held, talked to, argued with drunkenly as shipmate to shipmate. He got more and more feverish, and was bantered by some of the humorous fellows until he became wild, furious, and unwisely cried in all earnestness that a curse would fall on him who put a finger to her.

At that a howling roar, derisive, side-splitting, jarred the beams overhead.

Monty's lips crackled terrible things at them. His excitable passionate temper was ever easily aroused, and now half-crazy he flung expressive, angry, fearful words. It was great sport to hear him damn them, call them name of a name, pigs and sons of pigs, dirty cows; to offer to kill them all together or three at a time.

Oh-ho-ho-ho! They knew how he felt. One man slapped another on the shoulder. They bent over, reeling. They leaned back, staggering. And they laughed. They shouted. They howled.

McGuire, passing around the group, slipped easily between those in his way and made for the door into the cabin. He looked about for Brundage and did not see him.

Three or four men, too drunk to rise but still interested in what was going on, sprawled in chairs or swayed with arms on the table, blinking around them, fumbling with their cups, drinking on and on. Blear-eyed, they craned around to look, trying to ask what was going on in there.

McGuire moved rapidly. He caught up a wire tray, snatched tins and bread from the table; picked up a bucket of hot water freshly brought from the galley for the punch, and throwing open the door of Mrs. Gorvhalsen's room, set the water carefully in a corner. He tumbled the food from the tray and again filled it.

He snatched a revolver from the belt of a fellow half-dozing in a chair. It was loaded. The man tried to protest, starting up quarrelsomely, and sank back under the butt of it.

"'Ere whash goin' on?" a voice from the table demanded.

"He said you were drunk," McGuire answered on the instant. "I'm stowin' some o' this stuff away—have something to eat tomorrow."

The last explanation was not heard. The man was glaring in haughty disapproval at his

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shipmate who, supposedly, had been insulting.

McGuire worked busily, throwing into the room whatever he could get his hands on that might be of future value there. He picked two other revolvers off the floor, but they were unloaded; and he was scurrying about to find cartridges when an outroar in the stern stateroom made him pause.

A HEARTY outburst, like a cheer, followed by a buzzing babble showed that the men there had suddenly become happily excited over something that was bound to have trouble in it to be so eagerly accepted. He closed Mrs. Gorvhalsen's door carefully and started aft.

But the men were coming back, half-dragging Eve with them. Dicer was grinning importantly and well to the front. She hung a dead weight in their hands and moaned in sobs for mercy.

One of the men helping to force her along wore her brother's blood-stained coat, but she did not notice it. A fellow had snatched the crucifix from her hands and would have put it into his pocket, but men on each side stormingly told him it was Monty's. Forecastle men hate a thief. The fellow with a shout flung the cross backward toward Monty. He had been let go by his shipmates, and picked the crucifix from the deck, cursing as he reached for it.

It was Dicer who by unpremeditated inspiration had squawked—

"Le's shyke dice f'r 'er!"

That had touched and aroused exactly what they wanted. That would be feverish sport and fair. Dicer had shrilled over and over—

"That's fair!"

There was excitement and novelty.

They were hot, sweating and grinning.

"Put 'er on the table—in the cabin!"

That had set them in motion. This was to be a game worth the playing. Each man was to have his chance. It was fair. Faces leered eagerly, one into another; bodies swayed, feet stumbled. There was lurching and shoving, but good-nature.

Dicer rattled his leather box excitedly under their noses. Eve was grabbed and they started out with her.

They were not rough with Eve. Some even tried to soothe her as they stumbled drunkenly with her weight on their arms. They were not gentle. They simply did not want to damage by wrenching or bruising the prize they were to gamble for. They talked loudly, some at her. Others boasted.

Dishes and bottles were overturned and pushed aside, and two men sprang on to the table and stood unsteadily while others lifted Eve up to them. They tried to make her stand, but she had no strength. The two men held her up, coaxed, swore at her. She hung limply with her swollen stained face turning to them and the men below her, pleading. She begged, she prayed; but they had neither eyes nor ears. Her face fell into her hands, and when the men let go of her, she dropped, lay on her knees and side, swaying slightly, moaning piteously.

Some men hastily poured full cups of raw liquor into themselves. Old Tom, too drunk to stand alone, held on to a stanchion and stared dully at nothing. Some called for him to line up—they were going to throw for the girl. His tongue was too thick to make himself understood, but he clung the tighter to the stanchion as though some one might try to pull him into one or another of the groups forming on each side of the table. Benny was dead drunk and on the deck.

McGuire, seeing what was now going on, pulled at the open collar of his shirt. He felt the need of air and of something to hold him from sagging. But he was not excited. He had never been more calm outwardly or had his thoughts more vivid.

His brain was aflame. Overimaginative at all times, he caught the impression that a supernatural malevolence was cheating and would continue to cheat every effort he might make. He was himself half-drunk, and there came the chilling superstitious wonder that in being so he had broken the holy charm that would otherwise, somehow, have protected Eve.

He remembered the boy's long-drawn prophetic dread of what would happen, and by recalling that was confirmed in the feeling that the *Heraldr* and all who were in her were without hope.

The sense of helplessness was the burden that bore down on him until it came close to the reaction of blind fury. But something of the clarity that attends madness, giving intensity to one or a few ideas and obscuring all else, was near to him. He would get Eve out of their hands or kill her. He felt no revulsion or shrinking from the thought. There was no horror in the idea, and at the time it seemed so natural as to be received by his brain without a shock.

She had come into his life with imperceptible growth until she filled it. He had watched her turn from a shy, awkward, colorless child into a woman with youth, loveliness, trusting innocence all blended in a glow on her face; and had seen the face looking up to him with frank though unconscious confession of love.

He knew her as one above and beyond him: the thought that she would ever be nearer to him than a lovely memory never, at any time, had touched his mind. So gently she had entwined his affections about herself that he was caught unawares and deeply loved her before he realized that she was no longer merely an entertaining sweet little girl to be looked upon in kindly amusement from afar.

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His imagination in the vivid hour of her torture saw her as a child-saint, to be adored, not touched; and it hurt where never a wound had been before to know that she trusted and had faith in him.

He had succeeded in clearing a stateroom by getting it turned over to Brundage and had put food and water there. He had shaken the emotional Monty to his very soul. He had hoped somehow to raise such commotion out on deck that the fellows would go staggering and shoving to see what was going on, then he would have tried to get her into the room. But Dicer, inspired by the devil and the fact that he was clever at cheating, had fired the men to gamble for her.

THE men were divided into two groups. Sam-O was rattling the box, thumping it hard to stir the dice before making his throw.

McGuire leaped forward and shoved his way in among the men across the table from the negro.

"Get on the other side," voices shouted.

"Too many here now," he was told clamoringly.

Twenty-two men were ranged about the table; ten on one side, eleven besides McGuire on the other.

He shoved a man who stood beside him:

"Go yourself. ¡ Too far for me to walk."

A fellow from the more numerous group edged around the table.

Then with many a preparatory rattle and oath invoking good luck, Sam-O flung down the dice-box and raised it. Silence and a bending of faces to read—

"Four—four—six——"

Fourteen.

The highest possible throw was eighteen; the lowest, three.

"Good work, black boy!" "Can't beat that!" "Yippee!"

"Now Dicer, roll 'em out," said Clobb.

The little gambler picked up the dice and threw them into the box. He cupped it for a moment with both hands as he shook it up and down, then he removed one hand and shook heartily, dropping the box mouth-down. And men read—

"Five—six—six!"

Sam-O and the ten men with him on that side of the table were out of the game. They had lost. The eleven lined up on the side that had made the winning cast again divided themselves. McGuire stood with Dicer and two others; Clobb and four men were of a side.

Dicer passed the box. Clobb threw first.

"Three—five—ace!"

A shout of derision went up at him, except from the men on his side. They cursed their luck.

Dicer threw and won easily.

The four men were then split: McGuire and Dicer on one side, the Crab and a hairy-faced fellow with some kind of a lumpish growth under his jaw on the other.

Dicer won again.

"Didjer ever see such luck!" men remarked with envious eyes on the feverish lean-fingered little gambler.

It was now between Dicer and McGuire and men began rapidly to bet. McGuire was a favorite. They did not think Dicer could win four times, straight running. Not one of them imagined that he cheated.

Monty, who had been no party to the gamble, sullenly edged closer and closer. But they did not notice him. All were intent on the fall of the dice.

At one end of the table, crouching with her face on her arms, Eve shivered and moaned unceasingly.

Dicer dropped the little ivory squares into the leather box and passed it to McGuire. He shoved it back, saying—

"You first—throw 'em!"

Dicer drew in his scrawny neck and stared suspiciously. His eyes angrily questioned McGuire's face.

McGuire leaned lazily, low on the table with an arm extended along it and one hand down at his side. He looked sleepy, his heavy lids were almost closed, but he was not smiling. Dicer spat contemptuously on to the deck:

"W'at yer think yer doin'? Puttin' ha Joner hon me 'er somepin'?"

As he spoke he cupped his two hands over the box for a moment, shook it upside down and back, then rattled the dice briskly. He was just turning the box to bring it down on its mouth when McGuire reached out and caught his arm.

"Wait a minute—wait a minute," he said easily, and brought his other hand up with a knife in it.

Quickly he drew the point of the knife across the table, cutting the crisp linen:

"See that mark? You spill the dice clear across it—ever' one of them—an' don't reach for 'em, either—or I'll put this through your heart!"

McGuire demanded no more than he had the right to require of the one who threw against him; but from much shaking on tops of sea-chests and other places of small surface the men were used to dumping the dice from the box, mouth to board, instead of rolling them out.

They thought McGuire's words only a superstitious quirk such as every fellow who meddles with chance games is pretty sure to have at least once in a while.

But Dicer knew what McGuire meant. By spilling the dice close to himself he had always

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been able to pick them up first and put them into the box—as a sort of courtesy for the man next to throw. Only he would take that opportunity to remove the two false dice that he had used and restore to the leather box the two honest dice he had palmed by cupping his hands over the mouth of the box.

His method was simple and he was dexterous.

Before making a throw the two false dice were concealed in the palm of his left hand. With two hands cupped at the mouth of the inverted box, it was easy to catch any two of the three dice into his right hand, at the same time releasing those in the palm of his left, and go on shaking with scarcely a flicker of pause during the transfer.

Because of the nimble dexterity required—and long patient practise had given it him—no one who did not know something of the trickeries of the dice-table would have suspected his cheating.

But Dicer was aware that McGuire more than suspected, and knew that if he were caught with those false dice in his box the irate cheated men would probably beat him half, if not entirely, to death, and begin again dicing for the girl.

"No you don't—keep your other hand off that box," McGuire said warningly, still within his gambler rights if he chose to demand them; and he was making the demands quite clear. "Now throw 'em out—an' pass this line."

If they went past the line Dicer could not snatch them up as soon as they were read and drop them into the box—as a courtesy.

Dicer turned pale. He knew that McGuire would stab him in an instant. His hand trembled until the dice were set clicking. He wanted to pretend to let the box slip from his hand to the deck, but men were pressing too close all about him.

"Throw 'em! Throw 'em!" voices called at him. Men were impatient to have the result.

"Throw 'em," said McGuire, and Dicer made his throw.

They passed the line. Voices jeered McGuire. His superstitious quirk had got him nothing of value. Those who had bet against him were exultant; for they read—

"Four—six—five!"

A very good throw.

McGuire caught up the dice quickly, dropped them into the box, gave it a shake, spilled them out in a long roll that sent them clear along the table. One even touched and was stopped by Eve's dress.

Breathless eager faces leaned forward—

"Five—five—six!"

"Sixteen!"

He was cheered drunkenly.

"She's yourn!"

Some, half-serious, offered looted gewgaws and trinkets to him, barteringly. Vile things were said in jest. Men prodded Eve, shouting at her.

As between himself and Dicer, McGuire had won honestly; though he had from the first attached himself to that little cheat because he knew the gambling would narrow down to the two of them. Dice can be read on only three sides at once; and the two false dice each had two sixes, two fives, and two fours; the duplicate opposite its true number. The lowest throw that could be made with them was nine—two fours of the false dice and the ace of the honest one. The chance of getting big numbers was greatly increased by their use.

McGuire, tensely motionless, looked at Eve. Monty was close behind him.

"Tyke 'er away!" was yelled in hearty humor; and other things also in humor.

Men were thirsty again. Gambling is parching work.

Dicer had recovered his ivory cubes.

McGuire reached out to her and tried to speak, but he had no words. Her face was buried.

Monty in the solitude of the stern stateroom had sworn to kill the man who won her; he felt the need of making fierce atonement. Also he was drunk. He edged squarely to McGuire's back, his knife furtively drawn; but the edge of a cutlas was thrust suddenly before his face.

BRUNDAGE, watchful, grim, had come down from the poop where he had been straining his eyes in the night, and for a long time he had been near the table, looking on, seeing everything, making no move.

"You're a judge o' steel, Monty," he said with quiet deep-throated slowness. "What'd you think o' the edge on this?"

There was no escaping its edge, silvery bright, freshly put to a grindstone. The two Kanakas, with native weakness for liquor and native weakness of limb after meddling with it, were sprawled senseless in the lazarette. But Brundage had found old Sails, trembling with age and nervousness, timidly peeping about the deck, trying to keep out of sight and see what was going on. Brundage made him turn the grindstone, then brought him a bottle of wine and food. Sails carried it off like an animal to its hole and kept from sight.

"What'd you think o' the edge on this?" Brundage had asked, and Monty swayed backward from it, not sure what Brundage meant but disturbed by the hard black eyes more than by the sharpened steel.

Brundage showed no anger; he gave no sign of having read Monty's purpose. What men saw the incident, if any, took it for a drunken joke.

They were drinking, watching McGuire and saying things. Some, grouped together with heads thrust forward, were beginning to listen

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to Dicer's wail as he held his hand out to them. Their brains, never quick, were dull at the moment. It was hard for them, who had watched closely, to understand what Dicer meant by saying that McGuire had cheated. But there were the dice for them to see.

McGuire caught a word or two of the shrill voice and guessed at just about what was coming. He turned quickly. Luck seemed with him. Monty was at hand. McGuire was going to carry her into a room.

"Don't let anybody stop me," McGuire said.

Monty understood the tone better than the words.

Men were fumblingly examining the little lumps of ivory. Dicer's wail rose. Some heard nothing more than that they had an excuse for claiming that McGuire had not won the girl fairly, which was as much as they needed or wanted.

"Them's crooked dice han' 'e hused 'em!" Dicer screamed.

McGuire grabbed and dragged Eve from the table. She did not know who had caught her and shrieked in renewed terror. Men cried out at him. Clobb, one of the group around Dicer on the other side of the table, lunged drunkenly, snatching. His hand came away with a piece torn from her skirt. There was a rush. Yelling, Brundage struck a man across the face with the edge of his cutlas. Dicer squawked hysterically—

" 'E cheated—kill 'im—kill 'im!" and ran with knife out.

McGuire had lifted her into his arms and was staggering for the door.

Sam-O rushed forward, his one hand out to snatch. Monty sprang to his back, digging at his throat with a knife-point. The negro fell and Monty with him. They rolled and tumbled against the unsteady legs of other men, so that some fell on them and many forgot what they were after. Monty slashed as a cat claws. Then Clobb brained him.

Dicer quick as an eel had got around the table and rushed fiercely at McGuire, whose back was turned and arms were filled. McGuire had got to the door and paused to open it. Dicer's hand went up to strike—but the top of his head seemed coming off.

He was jerked backward, clear from his feet; but he did not fall. Brundage's left hand was twisted in the long oily shreds of hair. Dicer squawked for help, for life, for mercy, as he was slowly twisted around so that he stood, face to the point of the cutlas.

The door shut behind McGuire, and men who were rushing for it brought themselves up motionless as they came before Brundage.

On the deck Sam-O was bellowing his pain. He had many long gashing cuts that blood ran from. He writhered cursingly, afraid to die. Some stared at him, just stared as they might have watched any other animal suffering, until one by one these men also began to look toward the door where Brundage's long left arm held Dicer fast by the top of the head.

Dicer had dropped his knife the better to touch Brundage's mercy with prayers.

"Let him go!" Clobb shouted, not for love of Dicer, but because he did not like the calm aloofness of Brundage, who seemed to regard himself as among the mutineers. The answer came at once and without words. Brundage as coldly as if killing a snake ran the cutlas through Dicer's scrawny throat and the point came out at the back of his neck. But he did not fall. He swayed and squirmed with fingers clutching desperately at the steel instinctively as he died, trying to pull away the cutlas.

Brundage held him upright at arm's length by the hair and unhurriedly jerked twice before the cutlas came free. He slowly, carefully wiped the blade on the body of the dead man, still upright, still jerking and squirming, then flung him away.

Brundage, tall, straight, turned slowly, his eyes striking from face to face with the impact of a challenge. He said nothing. There was no need to speak. If left to themselves these men would soon be beating in the door to get at McGuire. His eyes, dark and lidless, gleamed evilly. The twitching body of the little gambler lay in a red mirror of blood at his feet.

Drunk fellows, suddenly sobered a little, shocked by the chill brutality of his death and cowed by the manner of it, stood about dully. Some furtively looked at Clobb. A fight had to come. Every man knew that.

Clobb had his head down with neck drawn in as though about to rush. His big hand gripped the meat-cleaver. He was waiting for Brundage to say something. Brundage said it:

"All right, Clobb. Come on."

XXXIV

THE hush of the coming storm filled the cabin. Clobb's back was to the table, pressed against it.

He lifted the cleaver, about to throw, but did not. If the blow missed, one jump, a lunge and he would be like a chicken on a spit.

Brundage did not flinch from the gesture nor move the point of the cutlas from the deck where it rested, point and wrist in a line with his straightened arm.

Men sidled this way and that, standing clear, looking from him to Clobb, waiting. They did not quite know what the fight was about, but they knew it had to come. Brundage's bearing demanded it. Leadership was deliberately challenged and sympathy was with Clobb as against the man who had been aloof, menacing, unsocial from the time he stepped on to the ship.

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The cabin was littered with wasted food and broken dishes that had fallen or been thrown from the table, with stuff carried out of rooms and pitched down forgotten or discarded by those who had brought it.

Some men slept in chairs and some had been tumbled out of them so others might sleep there. They were in all stages of drunkenness. No man gave up easily to sleep, not if he could lift hand to mouth. It was throwing aside rare luck not to drink as long as fingers could move or the throat had a hole in it.

"What's the matter with you?" Clobb asked savagely, loudly and fiercely so as not to let anybody have reason to think that he was afraid. He was not.

The question was honest. He wanted to know. He was not eager to fight with Brundage, though it could hardly be said that he had fear of him.

"The matter with you," Brundage answered slowly, "seems to be the lack of a nigger's back to hide behind."

He glanced down contemptuously at Sam-O, groaning as he sat half-upright, trying to look at his cuts. The negro was afraid, frightened. Death was at hand.

Clobb stared blankly. It took two or three pulse-beats for that sentence to get into his head; and it was not easy for him to believe that anybody would say that to him. Some men grinned. He saw the grins which helped to put fire into his anger.

Curses rolled out at Brundage, and in a passion Clobb threw a half-filled bottle—the nearest thing to his fingers for a missile. He brandished the meat-cleaver and roared:

"Down 'im! Down 'im, men!"

That was unexpected. He was making it more than a personal fight, was making it a matter between the crew and Brundage.

They might even have hesitated to take up Clobb's cause had not a fellow made an impulsive slash at Brundage from the side. The cutlas, driven in a sweeping upward blow, took the man's hand half-off at the wrist. A flash of circling steel and a second blow chopped into the head of a Spaniard who, perhaps unconsciously, reached for his own knife.

The fight was on. Men took it up on every side. Brundage had looked for nothing like that, but he more than accepted it. He carried the fight to them with cut and thrust so that men stumbled backward in fright. A gun roared. Others tried to come at his back.

There were cutlases a-plenty in hands that knew something of their use; but Brundage had a dangerous skill and a wrist strong as steel itself. Besides, he was full of contempt for them and was cold and sober too.

He made at Clobb and would have surely touched him with point or edge, but stumbled against the negro. Perhaps Brundage thought that Sam-O had tripped him; more likely he did not think at all, but scarcely looking down, curved his arm in a sidelong backward stroke for the negro's head. Sam-O threw up his arm. It was cut through just below the elbow.

Brundage did not pause except to make a sweep that checked the men behind him and went around the mirrored mizzen after Clobb. Shots were fired—a man howled. What came to hand was thrown. Another shot and Brundage was hit. A dozen hands had cutlases outthrust. Oaths crackled and yells, high, strident cries rose deafeningly even among the burst of shells. Drunk men were floundering into consciousness, startled.

Brundage was surrounded, and though one blow of his could strike down three points, from every side and all angles he was being pressed and shot at. Men searched Matt Ward's room for cartridges, hastily overturning everything at hand. Only the guns the petty officers had turned in the night before, and the two found in the rooms of the dead mates were loaded. Brundage was shot at repeatedly. Fellows were afraid to close with him. They struck, reaching from arm's length.

Over and over Brundage cut into some man's body, striking with a dexterous flash-like movement, wheeling with arm in full sweep, keeping off those that were trying to sneak on to him.

A LONE figure he stood among them, erect and grim. The numbers were too many. A second bullet caught him. He put his back to the cabin's after bulkhead and pulled a heavy chair into position before him. Shots splattered in the wood near his head. Hurled glass broke in splinters, dropping to the deck about his feet. Men reached at him from all sides. Men with cuts in them yelled and cried, pained, angered, crazed. Men called one on the other to strike him down.

Somebody brought out a rifle and resting it on the edge of the table, fired. The rifle exploded, killing the marksman—the barrel was full of grease to protect it from sea air, and pieces of iron went like a bomb.

The Crab sneaked up to the chair, straightened with a lunge behind a cutlas and died on the instant, his head split wide.

Another bullet was known to have reached Brundage; he was seen to give way for a minute. Men paused, thinking he was falling, but he stiffened, stood erect. He had three bullets in him, many jabs, more cuts. Few of the crew dared come in close enough to bring down a smashing blow.

All the firing was not at him. McGuire was shooting and getting shot at. He had thrown wide the stateroom door and opened fire on the crescent-shaped group at the other end of the cabin. To help Brundage he imperiled Eve, who crouched on her knees beside the narrow

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bed. He had called at her to crawl under it, but she did not hear. She seemed to hear nothing.

McGuire acted as though it was not worth while to protect himself. He believed then that nothing could be done to protect or save anybody. This was the end; and he wanted one man's life. It was Dicer's. But not seeing Dicer, he turned on Clobb. Aware that he was not likely to hit what he aimed at, he was deliberate in taking sight as he shot again and again. And missed him.

Guns were turned on McGuire; but in the fight Brundage was not forgotten. They were drunk and reckless, those fellows, and not wholly cowards, though bravery is hardly the word for men who have such numbers against so few.

The shouting, screams, wails of those dying or who thought they were, the racket and clash of steel and broken glass, roar of guns, made a fearful noise; the shifting and darting about of bodies increased the confusion and the cabin was misty from burned powder.

Brundage in a strong ringing voice called on McGuire to get back out of the way:

"I'm all right, boy!" Again, "Back—I'm all right." The grim old fellow said it knowing better than any of them how far he was from being anything of the kind.

Clobb had held a cutlas in one hand and a gun in the other. After Brundage had brought up against the bulkhead, Clobb had thrown the cleaver, but the heavy blade whirred harmlessly and hit the wood. He shot as near pointblank as he dared to get and was getting closer when bullets from rearward made him jump.

Clobb crouched behind the table and shot at McGuire. Men stood clear from between them that they might have a duel, and they blazed away. Such as still had loaded guns fired on McGuire. Close rapid shooting is seldom so deadly as it seems that it must be.

McGuire, standing back in the open doorway to rest his revolver against the jamb, was rather sheltered, and the cabin was so thick with smoke from the burst rifle and the repeated firing that figures were soon only dimly seen as in a fog. Bullets struck all about him, behind him too. Once a ricochet *whumm-eed* like a terrible insect. He fired till the hammer clicked.

"Get back—get back—I'm all right!" Brundage shouted again.

McGuire could not see clearly through the smoke, and peered hard as he was closing the door. Perhaps Brundage had got into a room; but as he called to know, figures swept down upon the door and he barely got it shut and locked before they were beating as though to drive themselves through the wood.

Brundage could have got away then, or before, had not one of the first bullets caught him in the thigh so that he had been forced to put his back to the nearest shelter; and the chair was seized as much for support as for a breastworks. But he stood erect, and his long arm darted with blade turning in quick chopping blows.

Some fellow broke off the lid of a sea-chest and binding rope around it, made a buckler with which he approached confidently. In holding it up to protect his head securely, he exposed his stomach and the point of Brundage's cutlas went deep. The fellow's howl was deafening.

They could tell that Brundage was tired; but he was resolutely straight, his shoulders back, his head up, though at times he seemed a little unsteady on his feet. He had a bullet in his thigh, another in his shoulder, two in his breast; but if any one came within striking-distance all his strength and quickness flared into the stroke.

One after another ventured to a duel and others paused with lowered or poised blades to watch. Man after man edged in to have the perilous distinction of cutting him down when they thought he was weakened; but either their hearts failed them or their blades.

Clobb, his gun empty and no shells at hand, rushed infuriatedly to have it over; but his foot slipped on a red smear and he fell, sprawling. Brundage leaned as far as he could strike, and was jabbed by a broken rib in bending; but Clobb rolled scramblingly away, untouched. Brundage was slashed on the side of the head before he could straighten. The man who struck him leaped back safely, loud with boasting.

BRUNDAGE was very tired. His wrist ached. When he stooped the splintered rib had been driven outward until it protruded through his skin. There were four bullets in him and many gashes, each draining blood. He could not see clearly and distance became confusing. The cutlas was getting heavy as an oar; and the ship seemed to be rolling. He wondered how the men about him held their feet so easily when the deck seemed swaying.

He felt that if he could only have a cool drink of water, then lie down and sleep for a little while he would be all right; by that time the smoke that seemed to have got right inside of his eyes would have cleared away and it would make no difference how many men came at him.

He put his back stiffly against the bulkhead and with his left arm out rigidly to the top of the chair, braced himself, standing erect as marble.

Clobb came to his feet angry as a man can be. He was furious that one fellow should be so baffling; and cursed. Malign luck seemed against him, making him futile, ridiculous, his hot temper boiled. Seizing a cutlas and tearing it out of a man's hand, Clobb cried:

"Rush him! Rush 'im—all o' you—on him!"

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They pressed forward. They too were infected with desperation at Brundage. He seemed unkillable. A little more and they would have begun to be superstitious about him. But nothing is scarcely more enraging to men who are not in a mood for gallantry than to be opposed by one lone figure.

For the first time, as by common impulse, every man threw away caution and rushed heedless. A dozen blades flashed out in lunges or cutting downward.

Brundage struck to left and right, broke down one guard, overreached the other and split two heads.

Clobb's blade went through him—and Clobb leaped back, his hand letting go of his cutlas as Brundage raised his arm. The arm did not fall. He was impaled on two other blades and more were hacking him.

He did not speak. He did not crumple. His strong old heart did not betray him even then. Supported by the very blades through his body he stood two seconds or more, tall, erect, grim, and so died as he had lived—silent, implacable, sinister.

He gave way, dead; but as he fell, the uplifted cutlas held in frozen fingers dropped its edge on the head of the goiter-throated man and blood streaked into the thick hair and down the bearded face of the fellow who backed away in terror—wounded by a dead man.

Brundage was dead; but they were a sorry lot of victors. Seven men he had killed and many had wounds to nurse.

Fighting is sobering work; and they stared at him with no pride in themselves. Fight madness went out of them. Suddenly there seemed nothing to have hated him for. They could not escape the awe of his bravery and deadliness. They had no old grudge against him to make them gleeful.

From somewhere, Old Tom staggered, drunk, helplessly drunk and reckless. He swayed reelingly across the cabin. No one spoke to him. He hung on to the chair behind which Brundage lay, half-propped against the bulkhead. Old Tom peered down, blinking, unsteady. Then he looked around and cried drunkenly:

"T' —— wi' you fellows! 'Ear me? T' —— wi' you—all you—dogs! 'Ear me? Why don't ye do somethin'—*dogs!*"

He glared, scarcely able to stand. His words were thick, but understood. His manner too.

They did nothing except turn away, ignoring him. There was in them no further desire to kill anybody. If Brundage had gone down at the first stroke or bullet——

Glaring fixedly, Old Tom staggered off for the stairs and they could hear him stumbling, thumping, falling as he made his way. He fell and did not move, but muffled, distant "t'——dogs—" came down to them. Then silence. He was in a drunken sleep.

They had begun to drink again, but not merrily.

Sam-O had huddled himself into a corner and bled until he was unconscious. He had tried to thrust the stump of his arm into the yellow scarf about his waist and check the spurting blood; but it was useless. He was being drained, and at last peacefully, as if in a sleep, was dying.

XXXV

WHEN McGuire had slammed the door shut, he waited, expectant, listening. Voices of men had come through, hot with threats. He held the emptied gun to his side, muzzle at the door, determinedly. Soon he glanced down, and turning it over idly, grinned a little, bitterly, hopeless. He tossed the gun to the deck. The men yelled. He would have shouted answers at them, but Eve was in the room, still on her knees by the bed. Her arms enfolded her face tightly. She was shutting out the world.

He looked about meditatively, or rather trance-like; perhaps with something of a dying man's vision, reviewing life and what it had brought. His eyes fell on her and remained. She would have to be disturbed so that he could tear out the mattress and springs to help make a barricade.

The men ceased beating at the door. He wondered what they were up to and listened. The fight was going on out there. He would have ventured cautiously to peep out, but Eve got wearily to her feet and, holding on to the bed for support, faced him.

Her face was expressionless, washed out with crying. Almost every breath was a sigh. She was worn and bruised. Her loosened hair was tangled and some wisps hung in streaks, wet with tears. All her strength appeared to have gone; just being alive was an effort. Her hand went out gropingly as she took a step—not going anywhere, merely moving from where she was.

In the cabin two more shots had been fired. Loud voices rose. There was click and clang of steel. His eyes, looking at her, became vacant as he put all of his attention into his ears, wondering what was going on. Perhaps the men were fighting among themselves.

"I am not afraid," she said weakly, speaking out of silence, abruptly.

She had stood up to tell him that.

Attention came back into his eyes. It was as though he had not seen her before. She tried to smile, to reassure him, but the muscles of her face would not respond. He put out his hand to hold her. She slipped against him and was quiet, tired, exhausted, motionless. His arm was about her. With the other hand he lifted the bedraggled hair from her face.

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"I am not afraid," she repeated.

It was too much as though she had hope. There was no hope. She must be made to know—be told. It was too much to tell. All that he could do was be silent, hold her and wait.

A chill passed through him as he thought of what would have happened already had he been shot. She must know—and not wait.

When the door gave in—the waves would be kind to her, enfold her, bear her softly down. The sea was a kind cool-breasted mother that ever welcomed children to the eternal cradling of its swaying tides.

He started to take her to the window and there point to the dark far-spreading water. A gesture and she would understand. He seemed to have no words.

Silence was in the cabin. That meant something. He made a movement to let go of her while he turned to the door; but she held close, not knowing what she did, just clinging. There was nothing else in the world to hold to.

So together they bent their heads to the door. It was quiet except for one angry drunken voice. Carefully he put the door open to a crack's width; and at first could not tell what had happened. The men stood so oddly quiet, or moved slowly, preoccupied, glancing over shoulders as they turned away. Then he knew and quickly closed the door.

"God Himself can't help—" but the words stopped.

She was looking up with pathetic eagerness, expectant, trying to understand.

"Brundage is dead," he finished.

That meant nothing to her except that she saw sorrow in his face; and sorrow being there, hurt her. She was not too worn, racked, bruised, not too scorched by anguish to be tenderly sorry for him.

His mouth quivered and the lips bit tightly. His own death would not have hurt so much; and there could be no vengeance. That burned deeply. Moisture filmed his eyes. He was helpless.

"There is nothing left," he said with low finality.

She understood his voice more completely than the word; best of all she understood the quick, strong embracing grasp, like a farewell at the foot of the gallows.

For a moment she could not answer, she was so tightly held; but pressed against him yieldingly and then, whispering, gave her answer—

"I know—but I am not afraid—death."

Her voice was stronger; a radiance had come to her upturned face.

He saw that she was being brave. It had not been hope at all, but courage. They were two castaways, alone and afar, with nothing before them but the end. She was ready, reconciled; nothing of terror was left in her face and a glow showed through the weariness.

Life had given her love, however brief, and she was of a race of women that asked nothing more of life. Her arms coiled about him, holding to him with the innocent unconsciousness of a child.

Words are not easily spoken when Death stands near, unfolding his long arms. Her eyes were bright as if with happiness. He stroked her hair. It was unjust that she should be tortured, then die. He felt bitter for her; his thoughts were vividly blasphemous, but kept in silence.

"Talk to me," she said, whispering, wistful, lonely.

"There is nothing to say. Nothing said or done will make any difference now."

"But—oh—I—it is all right—but—" she did not know that she was begging, beseeching him with eyes and tone.

He spoke to her again, tenderly. It was what she wanted to hear. It was what he felt, too.

There was no harm in saying it then, no disillusionment possible for her, no need to try to make her understand that he was unworthy of being loved in return, at least by her; that he was scarcely different from the men out there whom she feared. Except for the mutiny there would have been nothing essential to distinguish him from them.

In him that feeling was too great to need to rise to conscious thought. He would have been even more unworthy of her love if willing to accept it.

But now everything was changed. There was no reason to hesitate; the more reason not to hesitate, for she must know, believe, trust him fully—then go to the window and look out on the black water. The stars were bright. The moon was coming up. It was a beautiful night.

"I love you," he repeated.

Her arms tightened answeringly. For a moment she dropped her face; but lifted it, unashamed. Twice within the hour she had awakened out of terror and found him protecting her. Always he had been wonderful.

"Sooner or later they'll break in," he said.

She shuddered. Fear came back in a flash.

After a moment's silence—

"Poor Jeanne," she murmured.

He knew the circle of her thoughts.

His arm went toward the window; the gesture was unmistakable.

Her head trembled convulsively into a nod; the words were forced—

"I am *not* afraid."

She was telling it to herself, commanding her youth, that was instinctive in its dread of the end, to yield its terror. He held her tightly and kissed her hair as he might have kissed her cold fingers extended from the shroud.

"God knows—everything," she whispered confidently.

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He did not understand. It was no time for questions. He said "Yes" as quietly as she had spoken.

"My brother——"

She knew without being told. She had known before she began to say it, and though she had asked she did not finish.

"Like a hero—more than that—like a—he was unafraid too." Then, "You will be proud of him."

Eve was crying softly. Tears had to come, but she did not give way again to the weakening droop of grief. She stood bravely, still resolute.

FROM time to time he listened, wondering at the quietness. There were voices, low, droning, indistinct; now and then a stir of movement and an oath.

With dread expectancy he had thought they would soon be crashing at the door. There was enough food and water in the stateroom to last for days, three or four, but nothing with which to meet an attack; and three or four days would be no better at the end than the next hour.

The men would not dare let anybody live who might some day tell the truth. Maritime Britain gave mutineers but short time for prayers.

If they delayed and got drunk— McGuire had a mad idea that warmed him for a moment and chilled too. With all of them senselessly drunk, not a head would be spared. He remembered a shanty tale of an imprisoned carpenter and cook, spared because needed, who had escaped that way; and when he had heard it his imagination of how it would be to do such a thing had made his blood cold. But with the chance he would not hesitate, though she must know nothing of it.

He strained to listen. Voices went on and on. It was increasingly unlikely that all would be dead drunk at once. He had a slight sense of relief in the feeling that the chance would not be offered. After all, when death is just before one, inescapable, one may wait apathetically.

Eve was bravely wiping her eyes and she stood close against him. Child-like, she wanted the shelter of his arms; woman-like, unafraid if touching the man she loved.

Eve did not want to die; but she had a strong heart and sheer faith and was unafraid. She slipped her arms about his neck and stared up at him, shaking her head slightly, with a sad smile.

"I am not sorry—about coming on the *Heraldr*. I have never forgotten that wonderful day—Honolulu. I loved you then. I know now that I loved you then. You were so dear to me. My aunt didn't want this ship or to come, but——"

"Your aunt is still—she is——"

"My aunt!" she caught the meaning before he had finished. "Oh—I thought—and Uncle David? Tell me—is—where—how—where—oh tell me!"

McGuire nodded. It was hard to speak.

"Oh then—then—we—we will be all right—if—are you sure?"

He told her as gently as he could that Gorvhalsen was badly hurt. Beginning, he continued: he told of Corydon and how the boy had died, and catching fire from his own words in describing the brother's gallantry, became fully aware of its splendor; and she wept.

The unsettling shock had been in learning that her uncle and aunt were alive, on the ship, near. It increased at once, together her hope and her fears, the dread of what might happen to them and the belief that as long as the powerful Gorvhalsen lived he would not be helpless.

Hope touched Eve and would not leave her. Her only doubt was indicated in the repeated question if he could be sure.

McGuire was tormented by the wish to let her have all the hope in the world and the need to make her know that there was none. He tightened his arms about her, then slowly urged her toward the window. He could not say what he wanted to say. He dodged what he meant with:

"You must stay here—I'll barricade the door. It won't be easy to get in, but if—" he did not finish.

It was an effort for her to let him go, to stand from him, again be isolated in the world; but she stood alone, watching.

Quietly as he could he went about putting things before the door, more and more aware as he worked that nothing he could do would amount to much. He was working to be doing something, making a sort of sacrifice to Fortune and asking that luck might come of it. He did not like to think of three or four days with the end no farther away than now. They would be terrible days.

"Oh!—Oh look—look!" Eve cried.

She could hardly speak. Her arm was thrust through the port. She was staring far, far away.

McGuire leaped and peered across her shoulder.

A little two-masted schooner was romping by with all sails set. Night distances on water are deceptive; he judged that she was something around a mile or more away, and she could be plainly seen, moving like a fantom over the dark water, silvered with moonlight.

Ships were not often in those waters; whalers came only rarely, with now and then a blackbirder. She had the cut of a blackbirder or trader and was sailing free on the starboard tack under the same good breeze that was slatting the *Heraldr's* canvas. There was no doubt that the schooner had seen the *Heraldr*, but she was passing on rapidly.

McGuire cupped his hands and shouted.

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He might as well have cried at the moon. His voice seemed thin and weak, a trivial sound on the great water overspread with wavelets. There was nothing at hand with which he could signal, though he put the lamp out of the port and tried to wave it. But no answer came. It meant nothing. Besides, the schooner, if she carried only a schooner crew, would not dare board anyway. She was too far away to know the need of boarding.

Together he and Eve in strained silence watched, and on and on went the little schooner. Gradually they had to give up believing that she might go about and beat up to them.

Nothing leaves hope at a lower ebb than the passing of a ship before the eyes of people in distress at sea, and McGuire knew that not once in a thousand nights was a ship likely to have been thereabouts; so the fall of an unexpected hope left them crushed.

"Please—won't they come back?" she asked.

He held her close to him and very gently said:

"No. She saw lights aboard. We're lying aback—she could see that too. But no one signaled. She has gone and I don't think there is anything in the world that can help—not a thing—your prayers—they might, but I doubt it—nothing."

They sat together side by side in silence, waiting. She leaned against him quietly as though sleeping. Her eyes were closed, but her lips moved with inaudible words.

An hour later a figure, swimming noiselessly, reached leaping out of the water under the bow and seized a back rope. He hung there for a time, breathing deeply, hard, and listening, then began to haul himself up. Reaching the jib-boom he crouched on it, motionless, peering, watchful, intent, catching every sound.

XXXVI

THE man, moving watchfully, came with slow steps down the topgallant forecastle ladder on to the darkened deck. Voices from aft reached him. He looked about carefully, a lone figure, quietly, alertly making his way over the ship.

He peered into the forecastle, into the deck-house, into the wrecked galley and saw dead bodies in the moonlight.

His feet were soundless. From the shadows of the deck-house he looked aft at the lighted cabin. The door was open. The voices were more easily heard, the words not clearly understood.

He went on quietly. There was nothing furtive in his manner. He was alert, tense, like an animal that moves among strange dangers.

Water trickled from his hair and short trousers, running down his body, marking the places where he paused. From time to time he looked aloft at the canvas loose in the breeze as if thinking of the good wind thrown away, and sometimes he stared out across the sea, peering hard toward the southwest. The schooner was out of sight.

He looked about the deck with slow, steady appraisal, seeing, knowing about what he saw.

The clank of glass and growled words with flurries of many men talking together came from the cabin.

A cutlas lay in a streak of moonlight and he stooped, peered at the black stain on the blade, but he did not pick it up. His hands were empty. There was no knife at his belt.

He walked in shadows to the mainmast and stood behind it, watching, listening. Inside the cabin men were grouped about the table, pressed together, bending over something, talking earnestly, drinking.

Following the shadows again he went to the starboard bulwarks and came along to the break of the poop. He stood by a cabin window, listening, but not looking through. He was without nervousness and was patient.

He stood for a long time, then, soundless, walked to the cabin door and stood in the light, his eyes on the men within.

A man caught sight of him, gasped noisily and straightened up with eyes glazed. Others looked. Some turned, some gaped over their shoulders, some lifted their faces as if frozen. The chart they had been holding down, its corners released, rolled itself into a cylinder. Eyes stared blankly. They were not seeing a strange man, but a figure that in no way known to them had come on board.

He stood naked and tense, glaring at them. In his face, short-bearded, hard, tense, black with sunburn, each man read what he most feared; the eyes were ferocious. He seemed capable of anything, the more ominous because his hands were empty, and he looked at them as though a word, a gesture, would be blasting without need of lead or metal.

Coming out of the night, dripping and wet with the touch of the sea on him, they were moved to an uneasiness that nothing more natural would have stirred; and he did not speak. Slowly, step by step he came into the cabin and looked about him, at dead men on the deck, at men dead drunk, and he seemed indifferent toward the living, turning his back in dleiberate unhurried survey of what was about him.

A fellow near the cabin door slipped out with swift stealth and returned almost at once, terrified. As far as he could see there had not been wood or sail. He tiptoed back and told it in broken whispers and gestures, and they, confirmed in fear, stared at the man in renewed puzzlement and dread.

He had crossed the cabin, looking this way and that and back to them. As there was nothing like curiosity in his gaze, so there was no

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alarm in his glance at them; but they felt an unmistakable purpose in his manner, knew something was coming and waited.

"Who—who—are you?" Clobb asked unevenly.

The man jerked his head to face Clobb and looked at him, just stared; but gave no other answer.

More clearly than if he had spoken they knew that he was not to be questioned; but his eyes, the poise and movement, the way he stared about, his bearing and tenseness, conveyed that they were answerable to him.

As ever a rabble knew its master, they felt his presence and did not try to understand; they felt only that manner sustained by energy repressed but evident, that carried a threat in the least movement, was redoubled when motionless.

The illogic of one man assuming a bearing of the kind toward so many did not arouse them. There could be no cool reasoning when there had been no natural means of his boarding the *Heraldr* and at such a time when it guiltily seemed an avenger had been called from the ocean's black depth.

The appearance of any mysterious figure would have made them fearful; but the mystery of how he had come was less disturbing than the awing dominance of his presence. There was so much more than a physical menace in his bearing that their fancies were unnerving. He seemed aware of being able to do anything that he wanted to do, and the contempt of his empty hands was like an insult that they were afraid to resent lest there be some trick about it.

He stopped, staring down.

BRUNDAGE lay before him. The dead body told its epic story. Three blades were buried in him, had been left there, as though the murderers feared lest the body would rise again. Brundage lay wearily, back to bulkhead, arm extended with his cutlas still in his fingers. He was covered with the blood of many wounds from head to thigh. Men, dead where they had fallen, lay about beyond his feet. Still, numbers had butchered him.

The man stooped low, peering into the blood-covered face, wrinkled, still grim, dead, but that was all, otherwise unchanged. He had gone out to meet whatever there was to meet as he had gone through life, unafraid and unhumbled.

He was stooped so long, motionlessly staring into the old wrinkled dead face, that the men about the table began to look uneasily, one at the other.

It suddenly seemed that the whole manner of his coming had been that of one who searched, and that there he had found what he knew was to be seen.

They were variously drunken, both with liquor and with fancies. Some tried to whisper. Lips were thick. They dreaded to make sounds. The faint thud or scrape from any movement was disturbingly loud. There was nothing but slow restrained breathing, wide, uneasy eyes. Some gripped the handles of their weapons desperately, their hearts sodden with fear.

The man looked around at them and slowly rose.

No doubt was left as to what he had found. His eyes gleamed with madness, but he did not appear to be about to rush at them. He was unhurried, deliberate. His gaze went slowly about the cabin, resting on lighted lamp after lamp, then came back to their faces.

The menace they felt was above blows. They knew something terrible was in his mind and that he was terrible enough to do it; but the mystery of his silence, his motionlessly rigid poise kept them awed: they were in the presence of the avenger and they had fear.

Without taking his eyes off them he began to move slowly toward the cabin door. They knew that he was not backing from them, not retreating; but they did not know what he was doing and were afraid. Their gaping faces followed his face on which they saw but could not read what was about to happen. Suspense and mystery are magicians that wait on fear. They had never seen anything so mysteriously fearful as the bronze-like figure that moved without sound and had come from they knew not where.

By the cabin door he stopped and pointed out on the deck in an unvoiced command.

His eyes did not leave them. He did not need to speak. He waited with the tense calmness of one who knows that he must and will be obeyed.

They shifted from foot to foot, looked furtively from one to another, at Clobb; but their faces were empty of everything but dull wonder. They simply did not know what to do.

He was standing directly under a large oil lamp, secured on gimbals. Once he glanced up at it, then again waited with the immobility of one who knows that he will not fail in his purpose.

A Portuguese, with face averted downward, began to stumble toward the door. Another man, staring, followed.

As the Portuguese came to the door the cutlas in his belt was jerked out and flung to the deck. The little black fellow went out of the doorway with a screech.

The men stirred as though half-aroused to fight. The next man paused, put his hand to his cutlas; his eyes were on the bronze figure that was looking past him toward the others who fingered weapons and glared dully, wishing for the daring to rush.

The bronze stranger stood motionless, but with an arm upraised, fingers resting against the lamp bottom.

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The man nearest threw down his cutlas and passed on.

Others were coming, discarding their weapons before they got near, the better to indicate their lack of a wish for trouble. They could not have told why; they had only a great and overpowering dread of what he might do. They knew it would be something terrible and at once, and were the more fearful because they could not imagine what.

They were cowed; but not all moved so readily. Some quite plainly had no wish to disarm themselves, to discard the last little security that is given to men in danger. They looked at Clobb. It was for him to do something if any one did. He knew it.

Leadership carries its burdens. Somehow he felt chilled. All the hot rum he had taken into himself had turned cold. He had never met anything like that silent, nearly naked, motionless figure.

Clobb moved. Men gave way from beside him, opening a path. He could not resist doing what was expected of him. He had to go on alone. They might help him in the fight, but he had to start. He was their leader.

Clobb went forward with a cutlas poised across his breast ready to slash. Men cleared their throats nervously, moved, craned necks, but stood where they were. They wanted first to see what would happen before doing anything themselves.

Clobb advanced with head drawn in and shoulders rounded. His heavy face glowered, distorting his bruised features to strike terror—as an animal shows fangs, as the savage marks himself hideously. He came with cautious stealth, ready to guard or leap. Some feet away he stopped, and loudly—

"Who in —— are you?"

There was no answer except out of the glaring eyes, not the tremor of a movement. The man was rigid as if cast in metal.

Clobb came closer. The muscles of his arm bulged from strain of gripping the cutlas. His head sank lower. He was going through with it. He approached near, stopped and savagely—

"I said who in ——"

IT HAPPENED before their eyes but they did not know what had been done —only that Clobb staggered back and went down as if dead.

Some thought the man had not touched him at all; but had just leveled an arm and the gesture struck Clobb down.

Whether it was that or whether it was a blow made no great difference. Whoever by choice used fingers against steel when the steel was in Clobb's strong hand, had the devil with him.

Clobb had not even struck, had not lifted or thrust with the cutlas. His hand had been gripped before he could move. The grip was like the pressure of rope under a Spanish windlass, and a blow had fallen at the top of his ear. That was all.

But men who had tried to watch could not tell what had happened, the movements had been so swift, the blow so hard that they could not believe that it had been a blow. He had just touched Clobb with fingers. It was easier to believe that than that Clobb, the powerful fighter, had been knocked senseless with one fist stroke, quickly, easily given. The unnatural is often more readily accepted.

Clobb lay in their way to the door. They thought him dead and stepped carefully over his body as they went, one after the other, empty-handed lest they too lie down beside Clobb and perhaps not rise again.

Out they went, all of them, one following the lead of the other. They stumbled and staggered on to the deck. Some of them shivered. The night seemed cold. They huddled around the mainmast and peered through the open door, wondering, afraid.

Alone except for the dead about the cabin, the man moved with unhurried swiftness.

The watchers did not know what he was about; but they had fear, as much and of the kind they would have had in watching a wizard prepare to summon devils, and soon their fear grew to cries. Panic put its feverish touch on some that ran blindly forward, not knowing why except to get farther away. Others made for the boat falls. Some stood and gaped in breathless fright for a moment more, then too rushed for the boats.

He had reached down the heavy oil lamp from over his head, knocked off the chimney, with a puff put out the light, and unscrewing the top was scattering the oil over the cabin. He was indifferent to who might be innocent, who most guilty, and nothing they could do would stop him. At any time after he saw the impaled body of Brundage, had they rushed him, he could have thrown and broken a lamp. He had been in no fear of them one at a time.

They could not escape him. They might take to the boats, as they did, jamming falls, cutting tackle, swamping boats, getting them cleared and into them. He was satisfied. They were going away without food, without water, without compass or a word to guide them, and there was not a shore within a thousand miles where cannibals did not wait their coming.

The two filled boats stood off, watching, waiting, listening, thinking every moment to see smoke boiling through the skylight and flames leaping from the cabin door.

In the cabin was silence. The man, after emptying the lamp, held a lighted one in his hand and moved quietly as a shadow, peering down. Those whose faces were averted he

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rolled with his foot; and when the head was covered he pulled away hat or cloth. He was looking for some one. Where Brundage was, there should be another. The silence was deadly as though some great presence was holding its breath. Even drunken men seemed to grow suddenly quiet in sleep.

Then a faint sharp click. The man straightened up and looked toward the door, holding the lamp high enough above his head to keep the glare out of his eyes.

Slowly, cautiously, the door opened, and the face for which he had been searching among the dead peered out.

"Great God!" came chokingly from McGuire. He staggered weakly with hands to eyes, pulling at them, holding them open—

"The Hurricane!—Hurricane!"

XXXVII

IT WAS quiet on the *Heraldr* and the wind held. The ship went steadily southeast by east. She had squared away at sunrise.

The men who had put out in the boats were back. They had hung off through the night, waiting for the *Heraldr* to burn, and at dawn they had begged to be taken on board.

"You will be hanged," they were told by a cold hard voice that spoke over the rail, without emotion, without emphasis.

Then they asked for food, water and a compass.

They might as well have spoken to the wind. There would have been as much of an answer. They moderated their request to food and water. It was as though they were not heard.

They asked for water, nothing but water. They were parched. They must have water. The fiery liquors had burned their bodies dry. They implored him to let water be put into their boats.

The half-naked man looked steadily across the sea at a far cloud-like mist on the horizon, the nearest land and one of cannibals. He said nothing.

Then again they asked to be taken on to the ship. They promised many things of their own will. He did not seem to notice them or their words, but having said that they would be hanged if they came back to the *Heraldr*, had nothing more to tell them.

They got on board and went to work. Some were stiff with cuts and had used the gaudy clothes off their heads for bandages. They shambled anxiously, eagerly, at duties, hopeful that he might be touched with mercy, not yet knowing who he was, from whence he came or how; but many felt that they knew why. Brundage's ghost had sent him.

Gorvhalsen had been carried up on the deck. It had been no easy work to get him there and the heavy body strained the strength of four men who were solicitously careful with him. They spoke to one another watchfully, saying: "Bear up the weight here." "Go easy there." One would have thought they were devoted servants; but they worked under the eyes of Williams and were still fearful.

Clobb, being powerful, had been told to bear a hand. He came, staring with sullen wonder at Williams; but Gorvhalsen, quiet in deep pain, just looking about, his great black eyes roving, said with deep-throated fierceness—

"Keep that man away—I'll kill him!"

And the broken giant would have tried to do it, but Clobb shuffled back on to the deck, still wondering. He would have understood better had he been thrown into irons, treated as dangerous; but he was seemingly ignored. When he had come to on the cabin deck, the strange naked figure, speaking from the shadows of the stern stateroom had said—

"Get on deck."

That was all. Clobb went.

Mrs. Gorvhalsen was by the couch that had been made for her husband under the awning where he could have fresh morning air and be free from the sickening stench in the cabin, the kerosene, spilled liquors, tobacco-stink and other odors unpleasant.

When she did not seem to be looking, Williams again and again looked at her; but she knew, could feel his eyes upon her and was vaguely troubled, though by nothing like fear of him. He was so tense, and had regarded her so directly and with a hungering gaze so nearly like madness that at first she had been disturbed. But that had passed, and she soon felt that there was something behind him, his manner, fierce, indifferent yet watchfully concerned with her, that could be explained.

What it might be, she never knew.

McGuire, who saw everything, saw Williams' look and wondered what it was in her that had so deeply moved his sympathy. From the first his manner toward her had unmistakably meant something.

With swift words in the cabin McGuire had told the *Heraldr's* story; but there had been no sympathy on his face then, not even toward poor, awed, bewildered little Eve, who came timidly out with her red-rimmed eyes wide-stretched at the hard, strange, tense man who seemed to have fallen from the sky—if not, indeed, to have rushed up out of the sea.

As the door the carpenter had nailed up gave way before his blows, with Eve crying reassuringly to those within, Williams had stepped through.

They had gazed at him in astounded silence, less because of his mystery in being there than because of his presence, savage, bold, at once reassuring and alarming.

He had looked first at Mrs. Gorvhalsen and

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stared. One might have thought he had never seen a woman before, or that he was recognizing some one after a lapse of years, or else that he thought that he was.

He said nothing by which it could be known what his frighteningly direct eyes meant. He had hardly looked toward Eve when she came into the cabin; but it seemed that he would never cease looking at Mrs. Gorvhalsen. She could not know what his look meant, but waited quietly. He turned from her. A glance went toward the carpenter, returned to her, paused; then at last reached Gorvhalsen, lying helpless in the midst of his black beard, his cheek rolled against his fist. Again Williams stared at her, and spoke. His voice was cold, harsh. The words came like commands—

"MADAM, you have nothing to fear." That was all. They hardly knew what he meant, the words were so at variance with his fierce tone; but they were no longer uneasy.

Yet, somehow, it was impossible to offer gratitude. Mrs. Gorvhalsen felt it. She said something, but could never recall what it was. He did not appear to have heard. He turned away.

It was then Gorvhalsen, his voice broken with pain, asked wonderingly—

"Who on earth can you be?"

The answer came at once, hard-spoken, half-bitterly, with no pride:

"Williams—of the *Mariana*."

He went out. They did not see him again during the night except as he passed shadow-like through the cabin, noiseless, doing they knew not what; but an atmosphere of security was about them.

That night McGuire, too, had asked questions and got something like answers for them. Williams, as little as it was, talked more that night than at any time they had ever been together.

He said the little schooner, *Francis Vore*, in charge of officers and some of the crew of the *Mariana* somehow got word of his whereabouts that must have filtered through native sources to missionaries, and had caught him off-shore.

Returning south, they had passed the *Heraldr*. He had seen she was aback and had gone through the port as noiselessly as he could, then kept in the schooner's wake until it seemed unlikely that he would be noticed. The empty forecastle and voices aft made him know at once what had happened. He had intended to take her over, to drive those men to their work, but when he found——

Williams stopped there. Brundage had been dearer to him than any brother; their strange friendship had endured all manner of fortune and it was only more likely that he would meet with sudden death than that Brundage would go unrevenged.

"Skipper? Brundage—who was he?"

"I never asked. I know this: He had a woman in his heart and broke it to be rid of her."

"And they gave him life?"

"They gave him death," Williams said evenly, stressing each word.

"For life, you mean?"

"He was a convict, yes. And, McGuire——"

"Yes, skipper."

"You go ashore tomorrow. We shall get close enough for you to make it in a boat. You'll be safe with the natives. You always are. I'm going on with the *Heraldr*."

Williams turned away. He had spoken.

"Skipper—skipper! Wait— I——"

He paused without looking around.

"I don't know what you mean. I've usually done what you wanted—when I was sober. But I am *not*——"

At that emphatic word Williams wheeled as though challenged. McGuire's strong earnestness died away. He knew the unwisdom of beating against that overpowering will, or trying to resist it by force.

He went on:

"I'm not goin' to be put on the beach 'mong a lot of —— cannibals. They might take a notion to fatten me up."

Williams came up to him as though to strike a blow; and he did, with words:

"I know what it is to be hanged! You don't. Better the cannibals. Every man of this crew shall swing. I'm taking them to the *Francis Vore* to give them up."

"But you—*you*—skipper! You give up yourself?"

"I give up the *Heraldr*."

"But there are a thousand ways—" McGuire was painfully amazed.

"There is no way but mine. That woman—McGuire, I didn't know there were any left in the world like her. *She* is a woman and ——"

"You know her!" The words leaped breathlessly.

"— carries her heart on her face."

"Skipper, you do know her!"

"Can't drag *her* over these seas to give *me* a chance to hide and those butchers the chance to run away. Gorvhalsen——"

McGuire was beside himself with excitement—

"You know her—recognized her—I saw—you looked!"

"Gorvhalsen may die. I don't care. And this crew—think I murder men one at a time? I'll let the hangman do that."

McGuire put out his hand imploringly:

"Do you? *Do* you?"

"No!" It was with a tone of finality, ending the questions.

But McGuire was doubtful—

"Skipper—you—" and that was all.

He could not beat against this man's secrecy.

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"I know where I'll find the schooner. I'm going after her."

"All right. She'll be better than cannibals."

Williams seized him by the shoulder. The grip hurt.

"You're not a fool—don't play it any more. Brundage was only a friend to you. He was more than that to me. They hanged me, McGuire. Hanged me by the neck till I was dead. That's what Brundage meant to me—and the only thing he ever asked me for was a Christian burial!"

"Aye," said McGuire in a dazed tone with regretful memory of his many jests.

"So you go ashore. That woman goes back to her own kind of people. Those men to the gallows."

"And you, skipper?"

"To —— if need be."

He said it bitterly, tense, passionate, sincere, speaking from among the ruins that life had left for him. Something added to Brundage's dead had deeply shaken his hard bronze-like poise, readjusted the values that were left to him among the ruins. He had a made sense, always, of what should be done and was heedless, headlong, unbreakable, merciless in carrying it out.

McGUIRE, left alone, meditated. He was at the cross-roads. Again and again with half self-mockery and part earnestness he felt of his neck.

There was Eve, too. It would be hopeless to try to make her understand. Long ago he had left the ways of her world. Were she other than she was, less trusting, less innocent, not so overflowingly full of faith—then, well then, being wiser, she would have kept from him as though he were marked with leprosy.

As for Williams and what he intended, McGuire knew well enough that he would not graciously and humbly restore his neck to a noose. He would get out, some way. Nothing could hold him. He seemed to have in leash a sort of elemental force that could not be thwarted or broken. He would dare anything and could not fail because he had no fear. It was as if he had brought back something of invulnerability from the other side of the gallows. He knew Death's secret and had contempt for Death.

Better to run any risks near him than safer ones elsewhere. But McGuire's devotion was deeper than a cold weighing of safety. He would willingly follow the Hurricane—it made no difference where.

In pacing about the poop that night—for McGuire under arms stood watch though not asked to do so—he looked through the skylight. Williams was standing below, a hand running along the rows of books. Now and then the hand paused, a title was more closely scrutinized. Once or twice he lifted a volume out, opened it, thrust it back—like a famished man without time to stay to the feast.

"—*to her own kind of people*—" sang itself like a sibylline sentence through McGuire's meditations. The cryptic truth was in that, somewhere. There, somehow, was Williams' confessional.

Said McGuire half-aloud—

"He's nothing left in the world but me' an' two drunk Kanakas!"

The next morning when Gorvhalsen was on deck and Mrs. Gorvhalsen was with him and both were silent with incommunicable things between them; and Williams stood rigidly poised, his eyes going watchfully aloft and along the deck; and Eve with the weariness of youth still slept amid troubled dreams; and the two Kanakas, wo-begone and shame-faced, worked in cleaning the cabin; and Old Tom and Benny, very ill, were mystified as to why they were favored by being sent to overhaul work of other men, then McGuire went up to Williams and said:

"Skipper, there isn't a boat left that 'll float. I just put holes in ever' one o' them."

Williams answered him in silence with a hard look and barely shook his head.

"Well, I know I haven't done it yet; but I'm goin' to—if you don't catch what I mean."

Williams glared, but somehow there was no anger in his eyes. The muscles around his heavy jaw relaxed, his body straightened a little; and that was all that showed how he felt by having a friend who would not leave when dangers gathered. His answer came on the sudden hard command thrown into the waist—

"Ready about!"

Men heard and jumped. They ran from place to place, anxiously wanting to be where they were needed. Old Tom was sharply told to get those men to stations, and Old Tom came up to the dignity of mate with a bound. He detailed fellows to clear braces, haul up the crossjack, cast tacks and sheets clear of their beckets.

Williams waited. He saw they were all at their stations and stood on the windward side, his eyes aloft. With a word and gesture he gave order to the wheelman, then called—

"Helm's a lee!"

The words came back amid Old Tom's roar and the foresheet was let go, the spanker boom hauled amidships.

The *Heraldr* came swiftly into the wind and as the sails began to shiver, Williams called—

"Raise tacks and sheets!" and the order was answered by voice after voice.

Poised watchfully he waited; then the shout—

"Mains'il haul!"

The braces were let go, the bowlines went by the run and the great yards swung as if of themselves; and the men jumped eagerly as they braced the yards up and belayed. Then—

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"Let go an' haul!" and with shouts among the men, Benny, on the forecastle, cast off the weather fore-braces and the men hauled to leeward.

And there was McGuire's answer. The *Heraldr* had tacked and was heading away from the cloud-like purple plumes on the horizon.

XXXVIII

OLD SAILS with his arms full of canvas came aft. As he stepped into the cabin he dropped his canvas and respectfully pulled off his cap to McGuire, who with folded arms leaned broodingly against the mirrored mast.

Sails was bald, with fuzzy chin-whiskers. His head trembled and the old hands shook with a palsy-like movement even when they held palm and needle and pulled at cloth. His red-rimmed eyes ran water and continually he pushed up the tarnished spectacles to wipe them with the backs of his hard, dry hands.

He admitted sixty-six years and probably had a dozen more around him somewhere; for his was the withered decrepitude of the age-sapped man. For all of its saltiness the sea does not readily dry out its slaves, but keeps them strong, pithy, wiry, the better to do their bitter work.

He was of a gentle spirit, quieted by age as well, and with the blood nearly turned to dust in his veins it was hard for him to get to sea. Mariners have scant use for old men on their ships; but he was unhappy to sickness with ground long under his broken, shuffling feet, and he walked with stooped humbleness before the greenest lubber that ever stumbled over canvas laid out on a hatch for cutting.

He had lived too long and was an enfeebled stranger among the new breed of huskies. All that he waited for was death. Many an evening hour he leaned, pipe in mouth, on the rail, looking down at the sea as though contemplating the great cool mausoleum, as more enduring as it was more vast than marble or bronze, that would some day be his and where he had stowed away many a good shipmate with honestly stitched seams down the front of his shroud.

Whether he sewed stormsail reefbands or gave the final stitch to a dead scullion, he did it with unhurried care. The pride that he would carry into the Judgment Hall was that canvas burst before his stitches parted.

"In here, Sails."

McGuire pointed to Matt Ward's room.

"Yes, 'ir. Yes, 'ir."

He stooped in ague-like feebleness and picked up his fold of canvas, tremblingly but without emotion.

"Only the one, sir? I thought—it were well to have some iron, sir. Iron 'r coal. There's them as uses broke holystones. If I'd kept reckonin', sir, it's more 'n four-score mates I've give their harbor furl. Way we all must go, sir—all must go. Here today—out there tomorrow."

While he talked he worked, slowly, his motions unsteady, but going ahead, laying the canvas out on the deck, smoothing the bunt, folding the edges, all with great care.

"Now, sir, if I can have somebody as 'll give me a hand to lift—my, my, sir! I never seen so many tears in a man. Dreadful times we've been havin', sir. Dreadful. An' this sir, I helped 'im sharpen this——"

"Leave it," said McGuire. "He may have to fight his way—up—but he'll get there."

"Yes, 'ir. Yes, 'ir. I turned the grin'stone when he sharpened it. He were partic'lar, sir. I little thought—it's here today—tomorrow—many mates out there as was alive yeste'day. If you'll take his feet, sir. Only the one, you say?"

"The only Christian."

"Oh, I see, sir," said Sails blankly, finding something not heard before in his sixty or more years on ships. "That would make a diff'rence, sir, in times like what we've had. They killed one poor woman, didn't they? The pretty 'un, I hear. All set, sir?"

They lifted Brundage. His fingers were stiff, hard-frozen at the handle of the cutlas.

The weight was heavy for old Sails. He staggered, but lowered the body gently.

"To think I help 'im sharpen it. Little I thought—it's the way life goes, sir. Could you hand me that side, sir? Thankee. I allus give 'em a straight seam. Very careful, sir, to make it straight. Somehow I feel they don't rest easy. Not good sailormen, no how. I know as how I won't."

He worked slowly, trembling, with head a-quiver, bending low from his knees, pausing now and then to wipe his eyes of rheum.

McGuire stood with hands to hips, feet apart, a shoulder sagging, and could not take his eyes from the dead, wrinkled face. Brundage had died, as few tired weary men do, with mouth tightly closed.

The monotonous rambling of Sails' aged voice went on and on like a garrulous funeral chant.

Brundage alone of all the many that had died in the short red hours of the *Heraldr's* travail was to have the courtesy of a shroud. The mutineers had pitched the other bodies over, and before dawn the Kanakas, kicked into life by McGuire, had cleared the cabin and begun to scrub and wash. The great body of Sam-O, misshapenly rigid, went over with a curse following it.

But French Monty had carried his crucifix, again fastened by strong cord about his neck. "It may help," McGuire had muttered to the corpse.

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"Here today—out there tomorrow. I allus feel as how a grave must cramp sailormen. Nothin' but a little hole 'n he'd been used to the sea. An' layin' in a wood box, all hard. I'm allus careful to smooth the bunt an' not have no wrinkles as you see, sir. An' make the seams straight. I know, sir, as how I won't be easy if the seam down front ain't straight."

Iron links had been brought by one of the Kanakas and Sails put them at the feet, folding over the flap and stitching it snugly.

"Time was I couldn't sleep well the night after I put a mate in canvas—notice them seams, sir? There's none as does it better 'an that—but I'd say to myself, 'Sails, if you didn't give 'em a snug furl—' an' I'd lay an' think over ever' stitch an' know—I never seen a corpse what had such a look, like he wasn't done fightin' yet—then I'd go right t' sleep."

Sails got up stiffly and walked to Brundage's head where he again knelt and held the flap a moment, peering down at the hard-set face. He laid the flap across it and the point of his needle dipped into the canvas.

"God!" said McGuire.

"Yes, 'ir. Yes, 'ir. It's all in His hands now an' He knows all about what we never say to nobody. Here today—'n the cable parts an' we go driftin' out there, 'way farther'n we can see. You say as how he were a good Christian, sir? 'N he's nothin' to trouble 'im. Them as keeps a straight long——"

The flap was sewn. Sails' old hands, shaking tremulously, hovered for a moment before the covered face, then the needle was thrust down.

"I'm allus careful with the las' stitch, sir. 'Lad,' says old Bill Windor, him as was Sails 'n I was a young un on the *Cambyses*, 'Lad,' says he, 'if you ever see a ghost you'll know as how you forgot the las' stitch. Allus take a turn through the nose, lad, the las' thing.' An' there he is, sir, ready for to be put on the gratin'."

Sails got slowly to his feet, looked about peeringly to see that nothing was being left behind and went out, silent, shuffling, his hands trembling, head jerking. His work was done.

XXXIX

AT TEN o'clock Old Tom passed the word.

McGuire, Benny and the two Kanakas, with uncovered heads, bore out the body and it rested on a hatch grating at an unshipped lee gangway, covered with a British ensign—a flag Brundage had once served.

The yard was backed. The men came, uneasily, all of them, and edged into a line, bare of heads, half-afraid, balancing themselves to the roll of the ship and waiting stiffly in solemn awe.

Gorvhalsen's couch of two deck-chairs had been pulled to the poop rail. Half-dead himself, he would not give up his voracious interest in life and what went on about him. There was no knowing what pain he suffered of mind and body; for he suffered without speaking.

His wife stood by and beside her Eve, pale, tired, her face swollen from renewed crying.

Williams came out of the cabin door, half-naked still, his body black from the sun, his face hard and unexpressive as stone. He carried a small black book with gilded edges. His finger marked the page. For a time he stood looking along the line of men. They shifted feet and eyes. Only Clobb stared back at him.

Without opening the book, Williams began slowly:

"Man that is born of woman has but a short time to live and is full of misery. He comes up and is cut down like a flower. He flees as from a shadow, and never continues in one place. In the midst of life we are in death——"

His voice was strong, hard, not loud. Each word fell carefully. He was no longer looking at any one around him, but far away where the sky bent down to touch the water as if whoever reached the horizon might easily climb into heaven.

Then opening the book he read, glancing away from the page as when one reads something not unfamiliar—

"Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God——"

Eve was sobbing. The strain of the night, the solemnity of the moment drew tears from eyes that had already wept themselves dry. Her choking gasps came over the quiet deck with the sound of inconsolable sorrow. Mrs. Gorvhalsen had enfolded her with an arm and pressed her motheringly.

Gorvhalsen, leaning heavily with bearded cheek to hand, gazed down like some great barbarian of old time suddenly intent on the mystery that had come out of Judea.

The men gaped, swallowing nervously, scarcely hearing the words, but knowing what they meant by having their eyes on the man who spoke them.

"—we therefore commit his body to the deep——"

McGuire's face was that of one in great pain. His eyes were vaguely fastened on the little mound under the bright flag. At that sentence he took hold of the ensign and was lifting it as Old Tom, guided by a gesture, stepped forward and tipped the grating.

Brundage slipped slowly along under the folds of the flag as it was being raised, then fell, glancing out, feet downward, taking the water with a noiseless plunge.

The voice, lifted in high solemn tones, went on—

"—the sea shall give up her dead——"

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The ship heaved unsteadily. Sails shook gustily from the increased wind. Men staggered to keep their feet.

"—may he rest in peace. Amen."

Williams stood motionless for a moment after the benediction, his eyes far off, his thick-muscled body for once slightly relaxed; then, again tense and hard, ready to drive and smash whoever came against him, he sternly gave the order to haul the yard around.

Old Tom repeated the order, bawling it out, and the men shufflingly broke from the line and went hurriedly to their work; and the *Heraldr* was on her way to the reefs to surrender.

XL

SO IT was that the *Heraldr* gave herself up with all on board to the little flush-deck schooner, *Francis Vore*, F. B. Butler, captain; but conflicting reports of what followed were a long time disputed and never decided.

Captain Butler, formerly chief officer of the ill-fated *Mariana*, equipped for the search by a Queensland planter, had set out after pirates and came back with mutineers. The fate of the pirates was doubted and questioned, though there seemed little reason for it to have been; but that of the mutineers was settled with legal finality. They were hanged.

Their leader, Clobb, died sullenly. He would not have friend or priest near him. The hangman said he had never seen a man take the hemp with a stouter heart. The others moaned or wept or howled or fought or prayed—went out whimpering.

Four of the crew, natives and Yankee whalers, were given sentences of imprisonment; rather too mild, some people thought.

The old sailmaker would in all likelihood have been found guiltless, but he died in a jail cell while awaiting trial. He was laid in a rough gum-wood box and put in potter's field.

The *Heraldr's* carpenter afterward applied for the reward-money offered for Brundage "dead or alive," as there was no doubt as to his fate; but Chips did not get it.

Captain Butler knew, or said that he did, that Williams and the red-headed fellow, McGuire, were dead; but some of the schooner's sailors vowed up and down by every Bible that could be brought them that those pirates were not dead and that many a ship would meet them when it was not expecting such a thing.

It was likely that both would have been treated with mercy if not indeed a pardon for McGuire had they been brought to the dock. Popular sympathy flared up. The public, as the public has a way of doing, suddenly took Williams for its hero. Street-hawkers sold his praise, a shilling the pamphlet.

Most important of all, it developed that Mrs. Gorvhalsen was of the same family as the British Colonial Secretary.

Even shipping-circles cocked another ear than the one usually turned toward Williams' name in hearing how he had given up the *Heraldr* and had been put to his wits' end to coax the little *Francis Vore* close enough to accept his surrender.

She had been standing off the uncharted reefs where the *Mariana*, eaten to scraggly bones by the vulturous breakers, while Captain Butler was ashore, looking about to see what was left of the old bark and hoping for the help of a miracle to let him find the gold-chest Williams had said was left behind.

It had been on the strength of a rumor that the schooner made for Tinakula, and by rare luck she had run upon Williams in an outrigger, three miles from shore in company with two natives. The natives were let go. He had answered questions as to what had happened to the *Mariana* though little else could be got out of him. The schooner then turned south, shaping her course to pick up the reef that thrust its sinister self out of mid-ocean depth.

Williams was put into a locked room, an armed guard outside the door. As there was no occasion for opening the door between supper and breakfast, none knew when he had gone through the port. They were at no time in sight of land or he would have been put into irons. A man who wanted to die—he had not been suspected of that—might jump into the sea; but a man who cared for life would not go swimming off for a strange ship two miles or thereabouts away that might any minute put up her helm and make off.

As they had passed the *Heraldr* no one had thought of Williams; afterward, no one imagined that it was then that he had gone overboard.

So while Captain Butler, poking about on the reef, was still cursing Williams for having drowned himself, up came the *Heraldr* and threw her maintopsail to the mast almost within a hundred yards of the schooner. A well-remembered voice, hard, clear, powerful, called out:

"*Francis Vore!* Stand by to board us!"

Mr. Edwins, the mate then in charge of the schooner, was the most astonished man on the seven seas as he looked across at the naked black figure on the skylight and saw the decks about him swarming with men that, through the glasses, had a most villainous appearance.

Mr. Edwins was all for pulling the sails about his ears and making off as fast as he could go; but of course he could not leave his captain and six men stranded on the reef at the mercy of the pirates.

But the schooner lost no time in kicking her booms to leeward and sliding from under the

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bow of the ugly stranger, and, as she went, frantically tried to signal to Captain Butler to put out and meet her on the other side of the reef.

The schooner was safe enough if she kept beyond rifle-shot. She could maneuver in circles around the heavier, sluggish square-rigger. But Mr. Edwins thought it wise to keep a long distance off. That pirate was dangerous with a ship under him and enough men around his deck to storm a frigate.

Mr. Edwins made so large a circle in getting to the other side of the reef that Captain Butler, when he at last reached his schooner, heatedly declared that his boat-crew might as well have rowed the rest of the way back to Sydney—and what in —— was the matter, anyway?

He heard and guessed at once that Williams had swum to that ship and either found the crew in mutiny or stirred them to it, and knowing where the *Francis* would stop, he had followed to have revenge.

Captain Butler put his schooner within hailing distance, for the *Heraldr* still lay hove to; but as soon as he heard that he was wanted to come on board and take charge of the ship, he became doubly suspicious. Like Mr. Edwins and the second mate, Mr. Jorgan—who had been a seaman on the *Mariana* and, so the story went, was badly hurt in trying to recover the ship from Williams—he thought there was a trap behind the vague shouts about mutineers, wounded owner, women, needing armed men on board.

Williams did not appear to need them, but stood with empty hands, indifferent, on the poop; and the women could be plainly seen and were not alarmed.

THE *Francis Vore* was full of curiosity; but it was not strong enough to get her close. The parleying might have continued until evening when the schooner would have put to sea and escaped the risk of being attacked in darkness or calm; but a figure dived from the *Heraldr's* taffrail and with unhurried ease swam off to the schooner.

They watched him come; and the officers began to say ungodly things to themselves as he drew near so that they could clearly recognize that unmistakable red hair, wide impudent mouth, even the smile and the lazily lidded eyes. He came right to the schooner's side and treading water under her bulwarks, coolly demanded of the faces above if they were going to stand there and let an old friend drown. That awakened them. A line was thrown over. He came scrambling up like a cat.

They refused to believe him. He seemed too much smiling over a secret, too much at ease, and too confoundedly impudent for any use but irons and rope-end.

Jorgan would like to have smashed him on the jaw.

McGuire told the story. They thought part of it might be true, but why couldn't the women and owner be sent over in a boat? Gorvhalsen could not be moved. The crew was cowed now—but Williams had to sleep some time, didn't he? And then——

"Ever hear that fable, Æsop's or somebody's, about the man with the sack of grain, the goose and the fox at the river's edge?" McGuire asked of Captain Butler. "Only had little boat—couldn't take but one thing across with him at a time. If he took the fox, the goose would eat the grain. Took the grain, the fox would eat the goose. If he took the goose and left it on the other side, on his next trip he would have to bring either grain or fox and leave it with the goose while he went for his third load.

"Williams's in something of that fix. If he leaves the *Heraldr* himself, the crew 'll be up an' away. If he sends the crew over here, you'll have to send your crew back to work the *Heraldr*, an' the mutineers 'll have your short-handed schooner before you can ask 'em not to do it. Why doesn't he take the *Heraldr* in himself? I told you he had to sleep, some time. 'Course *you* don't believe all those men are afraid of him—just of his eyes. But ask Jorgan here. He knows—don't you, Jorgan?"

Jorgan growled. He knew nothing of the kind.

Captain Butler was not greatly impressed, but was a little thoughtful. The thing that deeply troubled his doubt was why Williams was willing to give himself up. And McGuire, too—why?

"Oh," said McGuire easily as if really telling him, "the earth's split itself in two an' we don't want to be left on the uninhabited part. Besides, there's too much salt in the sea now from the tears of the unhappy dead. An' nothing is left in the world to drink but the blood out o' one's own heart. Bein' weary, maybe *he* wants a deep, sweet sleep while men with rope about their necks do the hangman's jig above his grave. As for me—I've got saints wearin' armor made o' sun-scales lookin' out for me, so I'm all right even 'mong wicked fellows like you!"

The wisdom of his nonsense was beyond them: he was crazy or thought that they were fools. Captain Butler snorted impatiently and moved his gaze meditatively to the *Heraldr*.

Mr. Edwins frowned upon McGuire. Mr. Jorgan regarded him with the intentness of the muscular man annoyed by a gabbler.

All were trying to imagine the trick Williams expected to play them. They could see that McGuire was amused, was half-mocking them; and being hard-headed men, they did not in the least understand.

He became not more earnest exactly, but a little more convincing as he said:

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"You'll be the men ever'body'll look at when you get back to Sydney—point at—gape at—with all the papers writin' about you—the men that were too scared o' Williams to take him when he wanted to surrender."

The words had poison in them. Captain Butler frowned grimly.

"Oh, yes, you'll be looked at—pointed—talked about——"

Captain Butler demanded to know what assurance there was that no trick or trap lay behind the offer.

"Not a —— bit," said McGuire. "'Cept this. What does a man love best? 'Is soul, honor, wife 'r neck? Here's my neck. You can break it—first flaw you find in my tale."

As the boat shoved off from the *Francis Vore*, bearing Mr. Edwins on his way to investigate, McGuire called:

"I left men on the quarter-deck—Kanakas an' Yankees. Don't get nervous when you see guns in their hands. They can't shoot straight anyhow. But the crew was gettin' restless at the idea o' being hung!"

Before the sun dropped Captain Butler had boarded the *Heraldr* with all but five of his crew and clapped the mutineers into irons. He wasn't going to have them running around over the deck, not though he had to work the ship short-handed.

The *Francis Vore* carried a dozen seamen on her pirate hunt and four, with Jorgan, were left to her.

Largely because he was afraid Williams had arranged some unsuspected means of escaping from the *Heraldr* and partly to avoid the reproaches of the women if he and McGuire were put into irons under their eyes, Captain Butler had them chained to the foremast of the schooner, down in the hold.

McGuire was given no chance to return to the *Heraldr*, so all that Eve had to remember him by way of a farewell were the fleeting strange words he had spoken in the little while they were alone together in the cabin on the way to the reefs—

"—one of these days you 'll be a wise old woman an' have spectacles an' memories——"

"I won't wear them!"

"It's the people with spectacles that are wise, my dear; not little blue-eyed girls. You'll be beautiful then, too—like Mrs. Gorvhalsen. Oh, yes, of course—I'll be a handsome old gentleman with embroidered slippers. We'll sit in firelight an' talk o' the pirate that looted your heart. He was a dashing young fellow, that pirate. Shh-hh-h—not tears now— Some day I'll tell you all about everything—when we both have spectacles an' slippers by the firelight."

Again, and she remembered the tone as well as the words!:

"You must mention Brundage once in a while, my dear. Angels are likely to overlook him, having so many people to watch out for."

She had tried lovingly to question him, to ask about himself, but half-jesting, he easily evaded her; and though he made her smile, even laugh, she felt fearful that something would take him from her and never let him return.

She had tried to tell her aunt of everything; but Mrs. Gorvhalsen had been so quiet and said so little that Eve was sure she did not understand, perhaps had not really listened. But she had paused in wonder and silence, puzzled, disturbed, as to why her aunt's averted eyes should be filled with tears.

As McGuire, after speaking with Willams, went to the taffrail he had called cheerfully—

"If there's any sharks around here, you'll see me comin' back."

And that was all. Eve did not know then that he was not coming back. He did not know it himself.

It was the last they ever saw of each other; but McGuire, long an outcast from the ways of her world, would soon somehow or other have made the parting for all time. There was nothing he could have said to explain, nothing to have made her understand, so he had half-jested and said nothing of his pain.

He knew that her young heart would not break—unless, perhaps, if illusions of him were destroyed, and they would never be if given into the keeping of her memory. As long as she lived, no matter what love came to her and happiness, she would be tenderly wistful at the thought of him; but for all that have none the less joy out of her life.

As for himself—he was a wanderer who followed the winds of the sea, a brother to savages, a fellow who from time to time must need drown himself in the strong liquors that keep a man from thinking of things that once were his and of those that might have been.

BACK to back, bolted to rings in the foremast, McGuire and Williams lay. Jorgan went down often into the dark hold, carrying a lantern to have a look at the prisoners. He expressed his feelings to them, sometimes slapped, pushed or gave them a casual kick or two. He would hold the lantern blindingly in their faces as he scrutinized the irons and fastenings and told what he would like to do to them.

Each day he gave them the ship's run and position so they might meditate on the nearing approach to the gallows.

"The hangman's sure got hold of our tow-rope," was his frequent greeting.

A stormy day hit the water. They were off Pentecost Island. Evening came on threateningly. The sky was black. Rain-squalls swept up one after another like an army of infantry firing and passing on. To the west

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vivid lightning played with fragments of the sky and thunder-drums beat up the clouds.

Jorgan came down into the hold with his lantern. He had raided the medical stores and was feeling in a mood to have pleasure. The men above heard him yell—their faces bent over the hatch combing, and they saw Williams stooping over the body of the dead mate.

The pirate had loosened the iron from the mast and with manacled wrist had smitten Jorgan and was plundering his pocket for the key.

The *Heraldr* was a mile or more ahead. One of the seamen ran for arms and the others tried to get the hatch on; but before it was battened down, Williams was beating against it. A fellow seized a crowbar and thrust it down at him between the unset hatch and coaming. The crowbar was jerked from the seaman's hands and with Jorgan's revolver shots were fired upward. Then a fusillade was turned down on him and for a moment there was qui t. They got the hatch on and tried to signal through the darkness to the *Heraldr*.

Suddenly the seamen were terrified. They smelled smoke.

Williams with the hatch battened down on him had fired the hold. They heard thumping and pounding. He was jabbing holes through the deck to give air to his fire. Soon they saw the flame bursting up through the cabin and almost at once they realized that the schooner was filling with water—on fire and sinking at the same time.

They took to a boat. It was risky, lowering away in that sea; but it was death to stay. They had to get off. Flames were roaring upward through the cabin where the fire had taken hold of the upper deck around the skylight.

The *Heraldr* could plainly see what was going on, but short-handed, it was hard for her to go about and beat up to the schooner.

The men lay off in the boat, bobbing up and down, keeping it headed into the seas, and waiting for the *Heraldr* to come. They were fascinated by the glare of the burning, sinking ship.

Rain and spray smote the fire. It hissed and burned on. Ten miles away was a black mass of land over and over thrown out of the night by the lightning-strokes behind it.

They could only guess at what had happened. Williams had hoped to take over the ship and knew no time was to be lost before the *Heraldr* might come up. Undoubtedly, after the hatch was fastened down, he had started the fire to frighten the crew. Perhaps the fire got so far away from him that he had to have water to keep it down, and having knocked holes in the hull, there was no way to keep her from filling. He could have got air for himself and McGuire by knocking holes above the waterline—those were the haphazard guesses of the seamen.

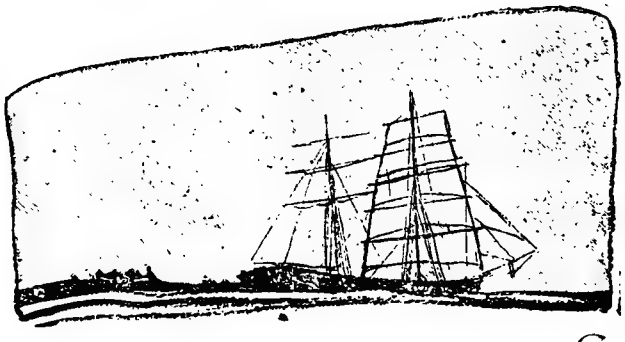
What they knew was that two figures emerged out of the forecastle. They had knocked down the bulkheads that separated the forecastle from the hold and in that way gained the deck.

They were plainly seen against the flames that had laid hold of the cabin and were eating up around the mainmast. The two figures were not excited. They even stood in the bow, looking about them. They did not call to the boat.

The fire roared. Its dazzling glare beat flickeringly over the water. They could see one man pointing toward the mass of land that leaped out of the darkness at every streak of lightning across the westward sky. Thunder pounded. Trumpeted shouts came faintly from the *Heraldr*. Steam sizzled amid the crackling of fire. Waves tossed themselves at flames that went streaming up the mainmast. The schooner was going down.

One of the men, the slender fellow, walked climbingly out on the jib boom; and from there, leaped. The men in the boat had watched him; and when they looked, the other figure could not be seen. Once they thought they caught sight of a sprawling form tossed into the light by a wave's crest, lying on it easily as on a couch—and that was all.

Nothing could ever make them believe that Hurricane Williams or the red-headed pirate was dead—no more dead than the Flying Dutchman.



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FATE'S INSTRUMENT

by L. Patrick Greene

Author of "No Evidence," "Thicker than Water," etc.

A DESOLATE waste is the Kalahari, South Africa's greatest desert. Treeless, waterless, its white fine sand holds the scorching heat of countless centuries, so that the sensitive feet of civilized man shrink from contact with it.

At time when the evil spirits of the desert bestir themselves a violent wind blows and the air is filled with sand; fine, choking sand, completely obscuring the spendor of the noonday sun. Wo to the man or beast caught in the fury of the storm. The heaping sand is a kindly shroud. The wind dies down; the sand-laden air discharges its heavy burden with a pattering noise as of hail beating upon a shingled roof; the sun shines with an increased splendor after its temporary eclipse. All is as it was before the storm awakened. The same—yet different. The high sand-hills have become gullies; the gullies, hills. Landmarks are wiped out and all is new. A new oldness, old as the desert; mysterious, terrifying.

The wild animals of the *veld* shun the desert save when the drought strikes the south lands. Then they trek across it the sooner to reach the fertile valley of the north. Ostriches delight in the heat of the scorching sand, and the booming of the cock-bird adds another desert fear; for that booming note is curiously like the roar of a lion.

If the desert is shunned by the animals it is looked upon with a superstitious terror by the natives whose kraals fringe its borders. The men-folk tell in hushed whispers of its sinister powers; the woman frighten their children into a semblance of goodness with stories of the diabolical deeds of the desert spirits.

To white men the desert is as yet an unknown quantity. Those who have safely crossed it may be counted on the fingers of two hands. Those who have entered—and remained—their tally has not been made. Criminals fleeing from justice have sought refuge there to find themselves brought before the bar of a higher court; scientists seeking to trace the beginning of the human race have there found the end; hardy prospectors, searching for gold, would have given all the gold in the world for one drink of water.

Yet to the bushmen the desert is home. Here the tiny people who once swarmed over the whole range of Africa find safety. Only a pitiful handful remains of a once numerous people, for in the fight for racial supremacy they—small of body and poorly endowed mentally—became the prey of stronger tribes. After countless years, the hand of every one against them, driven from place to place, they came to the desert, preferring its terrors and hardships to the malice of mankind.

CAGN, the bushman, was on the hunting trail. Ever and anon he would halt his untiring, pace-deceiving lope, and with nostrils distended seek to catch the pungent odor of buck, big buck, which were crossing the desert to new grazing-grounds. Then on again, his mind bent only upon securing a kill; nor did he give way to grief because the game he pursued was many hours before him. He needed no compass to guide his path; he took no bearings, relying—as he could with safety—on the unerring instinct of primitive man. No need to see the game he followed; no need even to mark their hoof-prints; his sense of smell was more highly developed than that of the finest hunting dog.

The sun had not risen when Cagn took to the trail; high noon saw him still pursuing his course.

The trail crossed the Tunya *veld*, that strange pathway of small round boulders which

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stretched for many miles across the face of the desert. Here grows between the boulders a small bulbous plant, unpalatable but thirst-quenching. Stunted trees here eke out a parlous existence.

Cagn stopped and pulled up some of the roots; munching them with great enjoyment. As he did so his keen, roving eye caught a red fluttering "something" floating at the top of one of the trees. For the moment all thought of food was forgotten. Climbing the tree, Cagn saw that the "something" was a large piece of red cloth. Greatly elated, he cut it down and tied it around his waist, jumping gleefully up and down as he thought of the sensation he would cause among his own people.

Quickly sobering, he set off once more on the trail, but now more slowly, for the scent told him the game was quite close. He could not see them for he had left the Tunya *veld* behind and the desert billowed like the waves of the ocean.

Suddenly reaching the crest of one of the "waves," he fell noiselessly to the ground. In the hollow beyond was the herd he had followed. They were resting before continuing their migration.

Now Cagn's movements were cautious; yet he moved swiftly, wriggling forward on his belly like a snake. It seemed at times as if he had melted into the sand, so cunningly did he disguise his movements. Even though the big bull, the sentinel of the herd, was looking full in Cagn's direction, he saw nothing to arouse his suspicions.

Cagn placed an arrow in his bow—a weak, insignificant weapon as bows go; but the tip of the arrow had been dipped in deadly poison. Just at that moment a slight breeze sprang up and stirred, ever so faintly, the red cloth about the bushman's waist.

It was enough. With a warning snort the big buck leaped to his feet and dashed madly away, followed closely by the rest of the herd.

Cagn watched the flight philosophically, yet wondered at the strangeness of it. He was not wont to miss his kill. Of a surety he must in some way have displeased the spirits. His hand fell on to the red cloth and an illuminating flash went through his mind.

"Of a surety," thought Cagn, "the spirits are ill pleased with me because I have taken what is theirs."

Relieved to find such a simple explanation of his failure to kill, Cagn returned to the Tunya *veld* and fastened the cloth on the first tree to which he came.

"Punish me not further, O Great Ones," he cried. "See, I have returned that which I took in ignorance. Have pity, O Spirits, for my belly is empty."

But it was not until morning of the following day that Cagn caught up with the herd and made his kill.

TWO white men, gaunt of frame, their faces seared by the desert heat, their eyes, protruding, their lips parched plodded wearily across the baking sand toward the Tunya *veld*.

For the most part they kept their heads bent down, dreading to gaze about them for fear some desert mirage would lure them from their course. When they did look up it was only to mark their distance from the Tunya *veld*.

To them the Tunya *veld* spelled a haven of refuge, a place to recuperate before starting on the last stretch that would lead them to the comforts of civilization. Buoyed up by their thoughts, they struggled on when every nerve of their bodies desired rest—to sink down into the soft sand and sleep.

They carried no packs, no tools, save a small prospector's shovel. Everything else had been discarded after the first few miles of their weary hike.

"Won't we ever get to the place?" whined the shorter of the two.

His voice rose hardly above a whisper.

"You go so —— fast. Wait fer me, can't ye?"

The other turned with a snarl.

"Shut up sniveling, blast you."

"Me throat's burnin' an' me bleedin' tongue feels like a piece of blottin'-paper. 'Ow much longer, I asks yer? Can't we rest 'arf a mo, cully?"

"Not unless you want to stay here for good, fool. We've got to keep moving. Suck a pebble; that'll make your spit run.

The little man picked up a stone and put it in his mouth. A moment later he spat it out, cursing venomously.

"Think yer bleedin' funny, don't yer?"

The other smiled maliciously.

"Thought you had enough sense to know it 'ud be blamed hot. Come on—" he pointed straight ahead—"it's only another mile at the most. Look! Can't you see the red flag?"

The little man shaded his eyes.

"I can't see a blamed thing."

A strange evil light flickered in the tall man's eyes.

"You've got a touch of desert blindness," he said softly.

"Don't yer crow too soon, cully. I can see you, —— you!"

The other shrugged his shoulders and increased his pace, so that the little man was forced to break into a run in order to keep up with him.

"Not so fast, —— you. Not so fast, or ——"

There was a menace in his tone, and the other relaxed his speed.

"If you'd throw that gun away you'd find it easier going."

The little man smiled, a low, cunning smile, and fondled the butt of the revolver that hung

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at his hip. It was hot, but he imbibed comfort from his touch.

"Not so you'd notice hit, cully. Fat chance I'd stand against you, hif hit wasn't for my little pal 'ere."

He patted the gun lovingly.

"Partners ought to trust each other."

"That's an —— of a thing to say, comin' from you. Simkins was a partner of yourn, but yer left 'im ter die back there."

He jerked his head in the direction they had traveled.

"You were his partner too. Don't try to swing it all on me. It was you with your sneaking hints and your crawling ways that put it into my head, —— you!"

"Gettin' chicken-'earted, are yer? I thought yer was soft when yer wouldn't let me put a bullet through 'im."

The big man exploded wrathfully.

"You know —— well why I wouldn't let you shoot him. Simkins has a lot of friends—real friends, you little gutter-snipe—and they are going to ask a lot of questions when they see us come back without him. Some of 'em 'll be along with us when we come back to work the mine. It'ud look nice for us if they happened to find Simkins with a bullet in his head after we'd told them he'd died of fever!"

"Do yer think 'e's dead yet?"

"Dead or dying; what's the odds? He can't get out of the desert alive, that's sure."

The little man shook his head doubtfully.

"I wish you'd let me shoot 'im. He might live an'——"

"Don't be a —— fool," sneered the other. "There's no chance of him showing up again. He's without water and without food. Come on and shut up whining."

On they staggered, their bodies bent under the pitiless rays of the sun.

It was only sheer indomitable power of will that kept the taller man to his feet. It was only the fear of being left behind and hate of his companion that kept the little man in his tracks. Sheer courage would have failed, greed and hate forced him on.

The desert seemed to heave beneath their aching feet, and they reeled in their stride like drunken men. The stunted trees of the Tunya *veld*, seen through their bleared vision, danced grotesquely.

Reaching the tree from which hung the red cloth, their strength went from them as wind escapes from a punctured balloon. They fell to the ground sobbing hysterically, their breath coming and going in heavy, labored gasps.

The taller man was the first to recover. Rising unsteadily to his feet, he fumbled at the strap which fastened the small spade to his belt.

"Come on. We mustn't give in now."

The other glared balefully.

"I can't move. There's no call fer hus both to dig; we'd only be in each other's way."

The tall man hesitated.

"Go on, —— you, dig." The little man tugged at his revolver. "I'm strong enough to 'old this. See?"

The tall man shrugged his shoulders and, first taking his bearings, began to dig in the sand a few paces to the west of the tree-trunk.

He worked slowly at first; then, as the hole got deeper, feverishly. A puzzled look spread over his face, and he began to enlarge the circumference of the hole.

"'Urry hup, can't yer?"

"I'm being as quick as I can. Why in —— don't you help?"

A low growl was the reply.

The digging recommenced, and as the hole deepened and widened the puzzled look gave way to fear. Discarding the spade, the tall man went down on his knees and dug with his bare hands, throwing up the sand behind him like a frantic dog.

The little man had crawled over to the hole and was watching his companion's every movement.

"Go on. Dig, —— you; dig. Don't think yer can put one hover on me. I can see yer. Dig."

The voice rose to a shrill treble.

The hole was now fully four feet deep, and the folly of digging further impressed itself with a sickening finality on the big man's mind.

"It's gone," he said dully.

"You lie," screamed the other. "You lie. You want ter serve me as yer did Simkins. But you won't, —— you. Go on now; dig."

He cocked the revolver with an ominous click.

"What's the good? It's gone, I tell you. You can see for yourself. This is where I planted the water-kegs and the grub, three feet to the west of the tree-trunk. Some one must have taken it."

He sat down on the edge of the hole and buried his face in his hands.

The little man rose to his feet in rage.

"You're lying. You're trying ter do fer me."

The anger died out of his voice.

"Play square with me, cully," he pleaded. "You're just jokin', ain't yer? I'll give yer 'arf o' my share in the bleedin' mine. Don't let me die like a bloomin' dog. You can 'ave all o' my share, cully. Give me a drink, won't yer?"

The other did not answer.

"Then, —— you, take that," shrieked the little man.

The revolver spat death and the tall man lurched from his sitting position into the hole he had dug.

With a maniac fury the other emptied his revolver into the still quivering form.

Then all was still save for the frightened

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sobbing of the little man as he gazed vacantly about him.

Suddenly the sobs gave way to joyous shouts. Directly before him, but a few hundred yards distant, appeared, shadowy at first, a sparkling fountain. Song-birds fluttered about in the trees; and the grass which bordered it was a soft, restful green.

Forgetting his fatigue, he ran toward the fountain.

Bright lights danced before his eyes, and then came darkness. The desert blindness had another victim. Moaning pitifully, hands outstretched gropingly before him, he staggered on and on, his only thought to reach the fountain. Even blindness had not shut out that glorious vision from his fevered brain.

SIMKINS awoke from the delirium of fever.

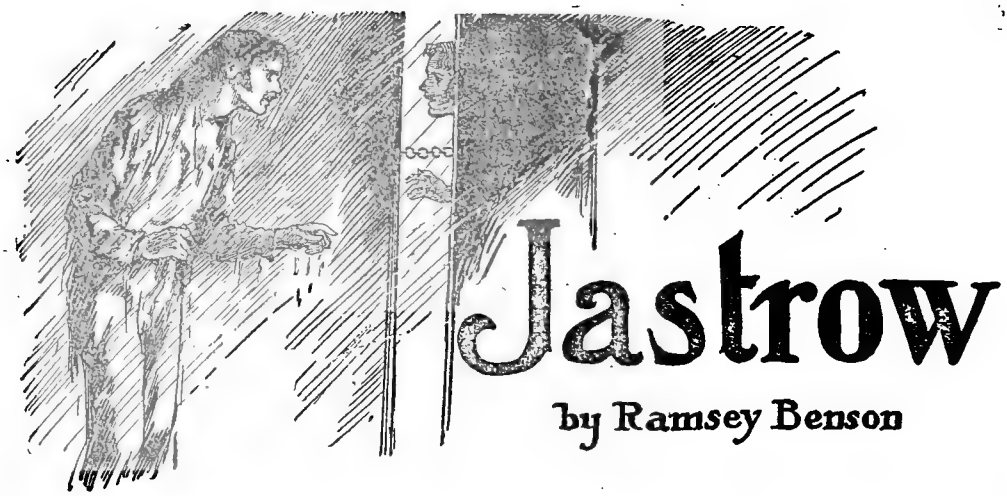
A rude shelter protected him from the rays of the sun. Near by the stunted figure of a bushman was digging in the sand.

Uncomprehending, Simkins watched. It was Fate's instrument—Cagu.

From the hole the bushman brought several ostrich eggs. They contained water, thick and evil-smelling, but still water.

He swallowed slowly, painfully at first, and as the water trickled down his parched throat it seemed to enter the very marrow of his aching bones.

After a while he slept calmly, and sleeping, gained strength and courage to face the hardships which were yet before him.



Jastrow

by Ramsey Benson

WHAT I have just read about Jastrow in the newspaper prompts me to write down some account of my own dealings with him. I have had my reasons for keeping still so far, but a man oughtn't to be too much influenced by merely personal considerations.

Understand me. I am none of your scientific detectives. I have no laboratory which I carry about in a grip and by means of which I can take a smell apart and develop a picture of the guilty party between the layers. Neither am I gifted with a sixth sense whereby to work wonders. Strictly speaking I have no right to figure in a story because detectives in stories always win out whereas I have to own up to some pretty foolish failures in the course of my twenty-five years with the secret service. Nevertheless I am going to write down an account of my dealing with Jastrow. If he is the big fish the newspapers make him out to be my testimony may have something of the weight of history.

Though I can't boast of a sixth sense I ought to say that I am subject to hunches. What's more, I put faith in them. That may look like superstition, but I've no apologies to offer. Outside of stories the big sleuths from Tom Byrnes down have been subject to hunches and have put faith in them.

There has been much talk about the burden laid upon the world by the great war, but I have never heard any mention of the multiplied woes of us minions of the law by reason of the unregistered issues of Liberty Bonds. They are like so much cash, good in anybody's hands, no more easily identified than numbered bills and if you think they haven't started a lot of new thievery where there was already plenty, you're simply not informed. I know the sharps attribute the prevalent waves of crime to the effect of the war on the fiber of men's morals

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directly, but I have a different theory. I lay it to the unregistered Liberty Bonds—billions and billions of dollars' worth of them scattered about for a temptation.

I blame the banks a little. In so far as they have to do with the trade of thievery unregistered bonds are money but the banks make a difference. A man can deposit money but he can't deposit a bond unless he turns it into money and so he lays it away in his desk or in a cupboard without locks or between the leaves of a book or some other place where if moth and rust do not corrupt, thieves can break in and steal without half-trying.

I venture to say that of the huge unregistered issues of government bonds now out, the great bulk is laid away in places where no man in his senses would think of leaving money overnight. In short the thieves are afforded an opportunity without precedent in the history of the world and they have risen to it with a rush. They certainly have done so, and the policeman's woes are multiplied accordingly.

But Jastrow. There had been a big lift of big bonds, and it fell our way because the goods were stolen out of the mail. Ten $10,000 bonds—ordinarily they would have been consigned by express with a strong guard to watch them, but a strike had so upset traffic that bankers and others with funds to transport had taken to using the post-office. A lone bandit did the job. He climbed into the mail-car, forced the three tame clerks to look the other way while he slit open the pouches and was gone with the plunder before any alarm could be raised.

Big bonds, as I say, and that circumstance was in our favor. The thief couldn't work off a $10,000 bond any easier than he could work off a $10,000 bill, and if he made the attempt he was bound to attract attention, especially with the uproar the newspapers were making about the robbery. We expected the thief to lay low for a while; but when, in less than two weeks, we got a tip from Wichita that somebody down there was plunging in oil and flashing $10,000 bonds by way of collateral, the chief thought well enough of it to send me to pick up the trail.

It was pretty faint at best and it soon petered out. I doubled back to Tulsa and from Tulsa I ran down to Hot Springs and there I lost it. Either the game had got wind of me or there was no game. Anyhow further pursuit would be fanning the empty air, and I so reported to the chief.

Along with my report I put in a request for my yearly vacation, to begin at once, and the reason was that I found myself within a hundred miles of the Big Chuck and its celebrated fishing. I had a notion to spend my two weeks of playtime there, and though the request was a little unusual the chief made no difficulty. His permission came promptly and I let no grass grow under my feet. I left Hot Springs by the next train, and after a jolty journey over gages broad and narrow landed in Donovan.

Donovan is the little town where fishermen who go to the Big Chuck to fish make their headquarters.

I HAD been in those parts before and I was well known to most of the boatmen in Donovan. They made me welcome and supplied me, for a consideration not exorbitant, with tackle and bait and whatever else I needed. Incidentally they told me about Jastrow.

He had come there in the Spring and hired a house-boat for the season. He brought with him a woman whom villagers took to be his wife and a colored girl whom they took to be a servant. But nobody knew. The Jastrows had as little to say about anything as circumstances permitted and absolutely nothing about themselves.

Furthermore they asked no man's help. They hired the house-boat and proceeded, by means of the launch that went with it, to tow the unwieldy hulk to a lonesome inlet a mile or so farther down, where they tied it to the roots of a gigantic sycamore. The launch was no more than a very ordinary skiff with a detachable screw and rudder bolted to the stern, and it was evident besides that nobody in the party knew much about the business, but they made shift somehow.

The sycamore where they moored was two hundred feet high, yet it scarcely reached to the top of the rocky bank which rose almost sheer from the water's edge and cut off every approach from the shore. A rarely secluded nook, in short, and there they set up their establishment.

They lived wholly apart. The woman brought Jastrow over in the launch to take the train and to fetch him when he came back, for he was much on the wing, and she made sparing purchases of the simple necessities in the village, but further they held no communication of any sort with anybody.

All of which, of course, was nobody's affair but their own. Donovan was a fishing-resort with all the implications and its villagers, used to seeing singular specimens come and go, mightn't have given the Jastrows a thought after the first few days if their aloofness had been the only strange thing about them. But there was more—an incident of mystery.

In the dead of a certain night a party of fishermen who had been working with a jack-light contrary to law and were drifting furtively home with the current came upon somebody unloading something from a car backed down to the river and lifting it into a boat.

The fishermen kept out of sight and watched,

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and after a little they saw the boat put out from the shore. It was Jastrow's launch and it made off in the direction of the house-boat under the high bank while the car vanished in the bosom of the night and was seen no more.

I heard about it the first day of my stay in Donovan. I was known there as an officer of the law and that, I dare say, was why the story came to me so quickly. Villagers evidently thought they were putting me on the track of something big and they couldn't understand why I failed to take fire. They were divided in opinion among themselves.

Some believed that Jastrow was operating a still and that the mysterious transaction at the river in the dead of night had been concerned with grain and other material. Others would have it that he was a counterfeiter and that the car brought metal to be melted and coal to melt it—coal of some particular kind such as could not be obtained in Donovan.

I took no stock in these theories, needless to say. Rightly or wrongly a professional detective distrusts the views of the mere layman, and anyway I could see nothing here to justify the villagers in their suspicions. Inwardly I laughed at them. As for the incident of mystery I deemed it largely a figment of imaginations heated by the sort of stuff Jastrow was accused of distilling on the sly.

Nevertheless I had a curiosity to have a look at the fellow and I made it a point to be at the station every morning when the train left, until he showed up there. It was the third morning and he came early. I was walking up and down the platform and I met him face to face. He gave me a quick, searching glance—more searching, I fancied at the moment, than he wuuld be likely to give every stranger. Yet I doubted that he knew who and what I was. He never spoke to anybody in Donovan except the ticket-agent from whom he bought his ticket, and the agent would hardly have informed him that there was a detective in town.

He went into the station and after a bit I sauntered after him, as carelessly as I could. He had bought his ticket and sat down to read and he held his newspaper opened out to its full width in such wise that I could see nothing of him but his legs below and the ends of his fingers back to about the second knuckle.

That was when I got my hunch. With a jolt. It hit me hard.

I sauntered across the room and passed near enough to Jastrow to touch him. He sat in a good strong light and I could see the tips of his fingers as plainly as I needed to see them.

I hadn't been mistaken.

"Those fingers," says I to myself, "have been sandpapered."

You will scarcely understand what that meant unless you are in a way to know about cracksmen and their methods. Drilling safes and rending them open with explosives is too laborious and messy and risky for the best of the talent. The best of the cracksmen aren't really cracksmen any more. That is to say, they don't do any cracking.

They open a safe by working the combination and they work the combination by pressing against the lock with fingers so sensitive that they can feel the tumblers fall. Once it was thought that a man had to be born with fingers like that, but the ingenuity of crookdom has discovered that sandpaper will give them to almost any man.

Ordinary fingers are overlaid with a scarf of tough skin; but it may be sandpapered away and the ends of the delicate nerves uncovered. I was convinced that Jastrow's fingers had been so treated. I had no more doubt that he was in the business of opening safes than I had of my own existence.

Of course I was interested—so interested that I pretty much forgot my purpose in coming to Donovan, though that purpose had been to relax and loaf at my ease and let crookdom for the moment go hang. No matter what a man's work may be, if he is worth his salt he is more or less on the job always—night and day, Sundays and holidays. I had come down into the Big Chuck country to fish, but when I glimpsed the tips of Jastrow's fingers, fishing straightway became a secondary consideration.

It was a good stalking-horse, however. Under the pretense that I was after bass I could the more easily set on foot the plans and projects which began at once to take form in my mind. I went directly from the station to the dock and I was just in time to see Mrs. Jastrow cast off with the launch. It was my first sight of her and I got the notion that she was rather sickly and lacking in force. Her face was brown with tan but wan and bloodless. I thought of her lonely life with no society but a black servant and I felt sorry for her. Somehow I found it hard to believe that she knew about her husband's burglaries. It might easily happen that she did not.

I BROUGHT out my rowboat and having stocked it with bait and tackle and a jug of water and something to eat, I put after the launch. I knew the lake well and I had no difficulty in locating the house-boat. Indeed I knew right where it was before I started, and as soon as I came in sight of it I threw out my drag and sat down to fish, or to pretend to fish.

I was nearly half a mile away to start with, but after an hour or so I pulled up the drag and drifted nearer. It was only what any fisherman might do; if the fish didn't bite in one place it was like a fisherman to try another.

I shifted several times until at last I was within a hundred feet, but though I kept close watch

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out of the corner of my eye, never from first to last did I detect any sign of life about the house-boat. That is, any sign that I could swear to. Once I seemed to see the lacy hangings at the nearest window stir slightly and the two lenses of a field-glass emerge just for an instant, but I may easily have been mistaken.

My plan was to get in touch with the negro girl, directly if I might, otherwise through some third party. I had worked with servants more than once. I believe practitioners of my trade generally will bear me out when I say that servants are to be accounted a helpful element, provided they are servants only and not in some sense accomplices.

If you are shadowing a bunch and there are servants mixed up with it you are just that much ahead. But Jastrow's girl afforded me no opening. I didn't so much as catch a glimpse of her. If she had showed herself that day I should have tried to establish some sort of a footing that might lead to an acquaintance sufficient for my purpose. But she didn't give me a chance.

In short my siege in the broiling sun got me nowhere. I kept at it until the day was well spent but I brought away nothing except the picture of Jastrow's house-boat etched into the tablets of my memory. It was rather an unusual craft—very clumsy by reason of its breadth of beam and with a peculiar snub nose.

But though defeated so far I didn't give the girl up at once. I have mentioned that I thought of getting in touch with her through a third party, and by that I meant the black folks in Donovan. Negroes almost more than any other kind of men are social animals and they have a fashion of getting together no matter what the obstacles.

Donovan had its colored colony; its members were to be encountered everywhere and they were an uncommonly clean and classy lot—just the kind you would think a decent girl might like to meet. But nowhere in the village, though I searched high and low, could I find a negro, man or woman, who had ever spoken with Jastrow's maid.

The colony had long since passed her up, in fact. They told me she had never manifested the slightest desire for the company of her own race. They saw her come and go with her mistress, and that was as near as they ever got to her.

Not to dwell further upon the devices to which I had recourse, I will merely say that I left no stone unturned and that nothing availed me in the least. I worked and worried through the two weeks of my leave and I had to own myself as little informed about the Jastrows the last day as I had been the first. Jastrow came and went, but if he had given me a look at our first meeting he never gave me another, so far as I was aware, while as for the woman, though I saw her at the dock in Donovan almost every day, she didn't glance in my direction. The black girl kept out of my sight altogether. For some reason she never left the house-boat during my stay, though she had often done so previously.

THE last day I made up my mind to drop everything else and fish. I was tired of the work and worry that had accomplished nothing and so I put it from me and started out for a day of sport. I got away early and I turned my back on the Jastrows, rowing up the stream instead of down. I left my boat where the backwater ended and waded the shallows the rest of the way, casting ahead of me for bass as I went.

That reminds me. On the chance that you are not familiar with the country I will explain that Big Chuck Lake is simply a mill-pond formed by a dam built across Big Chuck River about fifteen miles below Donovan. The dam is upward of a hundred feet high—high enough to take up the natural fall of water for a matter of twenty miles back.

The lake is properly so called in the sense that its waters are still or nearly so, but the banks are so high and rocky that its conformation remains that of a winding river. Although twenty miles long Big Chuck Lake is nowhere more than a hundred yards wide.

The best of the fishing is farther up. Splendid bass lurk under the dimpling surface of the river, but a warier fish never mocked the angler's art. Furthermore there is everything to make the approach difficult—banks that are very high and steep and rocky and the most amazing growth of low-hanging trees.

A fellow works for what he gets in those waters, and I worked that day. It turned mighty hot and sticky, too. Your true fisherman is supposed to feel nothing but contempt for the discomforts of the weather, but I failed to rise to so exalted a level. The heat oppresses me greatly. I could believe that I had never known the like of it. I didn't think of it as a portent, however.

Speaking of portents, the thing which came to pass made some stir in the world, and extensive reports of it were printed. I have a report cut out and folded away in my pocketbook and here is what it says about the signs:

> The day was very hot and sultry, and that was in itself ominous, but even more so was the gusty wind that blew harder and harder out of the south, or a few points east of south. The wind kept bringing over flecks of light cloud, like spindrift, innocent enough in appearance until they piled up in a dun bank in the northwest and in that form proceeded to edge back quarteringly against the wind. Of all the early signs that was most ominous, the way the bank worked down against the wind, edging farther and farther till it hung in the southwest.

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Presently it could be seen that the cloud was rising. The first of it was a thin haze that met the sun half-way up the sky and gave a sickly cast to the light of day. The haze thickened, too, and in another hour the light of day had taken on a strange ghastly green tinge and there was a perceptible chill in the air.

Then all at once a death-like hush succeeded upon the high, gusty wind, and after that the storm developed very quickly. Out of the heart of the bank in the southwest a mass of pitchy black cloud boiled up like thick smoke from a gigantic chimney. Men who beheld it with blanching faces could describe it afterward only by saying that it put them in mind of a great heap of casks, painted black, rolling over and over. They didn't tarry to gaze upon the dreadful sight, though, but turned and ran back through Donovan town, shouting to the people to put out their fires and get into their cellars, for the storm was upon them.

These preliminaries, apart from the heat, didn't get to me out there in the forest. I couldn't see the sky because of the trees, and they likewise cut off the gusty wind that meant so much. The curtain went up on the main show with a terrific flash of lightning and an equally terrific crash of thunder in the same breath, and these were my first intimations. But they were enough—the lightning particularly. For an instant it filled the woods with blinding flame and then left them as dark as if night had fallen.

Clearly something very much out of the ordinary was at hand and I thought no more of fishing. As quickly as I could I wound up my line and unjointed my rod and that done, scrambled up the bank in the direction of the highway, about a quarter of a mile back from the river.

It was appallingly dark, darker than I would have thought it could possibly be at that hour of the day, and I didn't get up over the rough, unfamiliar ground without mishap. In fact I stumbled and fell repeatedly, and twice I should have rolled back to the foot of the declivity only that I was lucky enough to clutch a shrub or a protruding root just in the nick of time. But I gained the top of the bank at last and there the elements in their wrath met me.

The report gives the exact figures. The gage registered three inches of rain in ten minutes—the heaviest fall ever recorded in Donovan. It was a cloudburst, indeed. The rain did more mischief than the wind, though the figures have it that the wind maintained, during the ten minutes of the heaviest rainfall, a velocity of eighty miles an hour. Some rain and some wind! I know because when I had struggled up to the top of the bank I met them face to face.

The rain poured over the rim of the rock like a cataract, but my first sensation was of having the breath snatched right out of my throat by the wind. Then right away I was conscious of being picked up and hurled back, and after that there must have been a blank, for the next I knew I was battling with the current in midstream.

It was still raining in torrents and blowing great guns, but I could somehow believe that the weight of the storm had passed. But though it was more than an hour short of sunset midnight itself couldn't have been blacker. I couldn't see a thing—not even the water that splashed against my face.

I was always a good swimmer and I felt no great concern for my safety. So far as I was concerned the worst was over and I had been so lucky as to escape without a scratch or a bruise or the wrench of a muscle. With my strength unspent I had no reason to doubt that I should presently land somewhere.

The way the current ran made it evident that the river was already greatly swollen, though it had only begun to rise. I was being swept along very rapidly and I could keep afloat with almost no effort. I turned on my back with my feet in front of me to take the shock if I should be thrown against anything solid and in that posture awaited developments. There was nothing else to do. It was so dark that I couldn't strike out to any purpose.

WET leaves slapped me in the face and by that I knew I was still in the river; and when they ceased to slap me I knew that I had been swept out into the lake where there was no such growth of overhanging trees. I tried to estimate the distance down to Donovan and I kept a sharp lookout for lights, but I dare say there were none burning, and anyway I didn't catch a glimmer.

Ordinarily, as I have already pointed out, the lake was relatively still water, but I could detect no difference in that respect now. There was no still water anywhere tonight. Three inches of rain in ten minutes with thousands of acres of steep hillsides to catch it and pour it into the Big Chuck—well, it was in effect a tidal wave and I was riding near the crest of it.

I wasn't in the water long—not more than half an hour at the outside. I believed I had passed Donovan, but I didn't know for a certainty till I struck with a bump and found myself clinging to the prow of an anchored house-boat. With that I knew exactly where I was, for it was Jastrow's house-boat. None other. There could be no mistake about it. The peculiarities of the craft were etched into my memory and recognition was instant.

I pulled myself up over the flaring deck and I won't deny that I had a queer feeling as I did so. Where my best strategy had availed nothing the hand of chance had landed me; if indeed it wasn't the hand of something yet

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higher. However I can't say that my heart leaped for joy. So far from exulting I felt pretty solemn. I was touched with something very like awe.

My sentiment toward the Jastrows had been that of a hunter toward the prey which baffles him, but it wasn't that now. Nothing had happened to shake my belief that Jastrow was a crook, but somehow the fact didn't seem to matter so much any more. Circumstances certainly do make a difference, and in the face of such a war of elements the every-day distinctions among men didn't show up so strongly. There and then a crook looked a good deal like another man, and all men pitifully weak and little and unimportant.

The house-boat was moored sidewise to the shore, and as it lay under the lee of the high bank the wind had scarcely touched it. From the prow no light was to be seen, but though I knew Jastrow was away, since I had seen him go that morning, I didn't doubt that the woman and the black girl were aboard, and when I made my way back to the stern of the hulk, where there was a small open porch built to serve for a kitchen in fair weather, I could see chinks of light outlining the door of the cabin.

I knocked.

The storm had pretty much spent itself by that time. There was almost no wind blowing and only a thin drizzle of rain, though the clouds hung heavy and it was as dark as ever. It seemed very still, in fact, so soon after such a commotion, and I could plainly detect sounds in the cabin.

A chair grated over the floor, something scraped lightly against the wall nearest me and then there was a fumbling at the door. I heard no bolt thrown, but I did hear chains rattle and when, in a moment, the door was opened a crack I perceived that the chains held it from being opened any farther.

A face peered out, but whether white or black I couldn't make out in the deep shadow.

"Who's there?" a resolute voice demanded, and I knew it was the woman speaking.

I told her I had been blown into the river by the first onset of the wind and that the current had brought me to her boat.

"I didn't mean to intrude," I protested and if my air was apologetic that was the way I felt about it.

The sharp ray of a flash-light struck me in the face. A professional instinct prompted me to turn my face away, but she was too quick for me.

"I'm sorry—I can't let you in," she answered.

I thought I could understand. Jastrow being absent, she had reason to hesitate, if only in consideration of the looks of things, and anyway I didn't much care. Only a few hours ago I would have given my boots to see the inside of that cabin, but I felt differently about it now.

"Of course not!" I acquiesced.

But she didn't shut the door at once.

"I'm not afraid of you—it's not that," she informed me, after a moment.

I didn't know what to say and so I held my peace. But still the woman didn't shut the door.

"You have a claim, in such a night, upon our hospitality," she avowed, after another pause, "and when I refuse you hospitality you have a right to know my reason for so doing."

I was convinced that her reason was good and sufficient and I told her so, but she paid no attention to me. She came nearer to the door so that her lips were almost against the narrow crack and she let her voice sink to a whisper.

"It's my husband's unhappy sister. She is a helpless cripple and so shockingly deformed that it is agony for her to be seen. She wishes her very existence concealed. That is why we brought her here secretly, in the night, and that is why we live a life so secluded——"

Her voice broke in a sob, the door was softly shut and I stood as in a great light. I have already spoken of feeling, in the face of that war of elements, that men were pretty much alike and all pitifully small. I felt so, yet only with the amendment that I esteemed myself smaller than anybody. I seriously thought of dropping back into the river and taking my chances once more with the perils of waters.

I DID no such thing. I can't say what I might have done if the course of events hadn't taken a new turn, but anyway I didn't drop back into the river.

I had been standing just inside the porch, and when the woman shut the door I started across the enclosed space and almost fell headlong. It was the sensation of walking off an unexpected step of stairs. I couldn't see six inches ahead of my nose, but I could guess what was the matter. The boat was listing sharply toward the shore.

The picture that my day's siege of Jastrow's house-boat had etched in my memory was still there, fresh in every detail. Without having consciously observed that part more than the rest, I could recall just how the craft was moored. The two hawsers which held it were stretched directly from ring-bolts fore and aft to the roots of the sycamore at the water's edge.

I hadn't clearly understood what it meant and I don't know that I shall be able to make you understand now, but the amount of it is that an anchorage of that sort has the possibilities of mischief in it because it makes no provision against high-water. The wise man who foreseeth the evil in the manner of the proverb would have reeved the hawsers through a crotch of the tree ten or fifteen feet above the ordinary level so that in event of a flood the lines might slacken as the river rose.

But Jastrow hadn't foreseen. Neither had

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he asked any man's counsel. He anchored directly to the roots of the tree at the ordinary level, with the result that unless the pull should break the hawsers the boat was certain to be dragged under and swamped. The list that tripped my unwary feet was proof that the flood had taken up whatever slack there was in the ropes and so long as they held the boat could rise no farther.

Though the rain had practically ceased I knew that the Big Chuck watershed was still pouring its torrents into the river. So far from having reached its height, the flood would keep on rising for several hours.

I knocked at the door, and when the woman once more opened it I tried to explain the situation to her. It wasn't easy. She couldn't believe that we were in any danger.

"The ropes are new and twice as strong as they need be—they'll not break," she insisted confidently.

"So much the worse," I replied and explained everything all over.

"The storm has passed," she argued, still incredulous.

"Very true, but the river hasn't ceased to rise," I pointed out. "You can see for yourself how the boat is tilted."

She could see that—had already seen it, in fact.

"It will tilt more and more till it swamps," I warned her.

She was silent.

"Bring your torch," I directed, "and we'll see if we can loosen the hawsers where they are tied to the boat."

Her answer was to call the colored girl and charge her to secure the chains after she should have passed through the door. Not until she had taken that precaution did she undo the fastenings and come out.

She handed me the torch and I led the way to the ring-bolts. The merest glance was enough to dispose of the expedient I had proposed; the knots were not to be loosened. They had been rudely but securely tied in the first place and they were as rigid as iron bands under my hand. Half an hour sooner, before the flood began to strain so hard at them, something might have been done to relieve the tension, but not now.

The woman stood by and watched me. If she had scarcely grasped the danger hitherto she comprehended it only too clearly now. I couldn't see her face but I heard her catch her breath as the ray of the torch flitted out to the big sycamore and showed its roots already submerged, with the hawsers that had been level slanting down at a sharp pitch and vanishing under the black water. It needed no further word from me.

But she kept her head.

"How high will the river rise?" she asked and her voice, though tense, was steady.

"No man knows," I answered. "But it will certainly go higher."

"What can we do?"

I flashed the light of the torch up the face of the high bank. It was sickeningly steep and devoid of breaks that might afford a foothold.

"I believe we can get up there," I told her.

I was thinking only of the woman and the negro girl. I had forgotten, for the moment, that there was another to be saved. Mrs. Jastrow didn't say anything.

"Or we might put off in the launch," I suggested.

The launch was the merest cockle-shell, the river bristled with floating snags brought down by the flood and the night was dark as a pocket, but there was a chance—with only three of us. I was still thinking of no more.

But she straightway reminded me. "We can't leave the house-boat," she answered quietly, and I felt smaller than ever.

A desperate emergency and it prompted a desperate device. Even as it took form in my mind I could discern hardly a spark of promise in it. But under the circumstances the faintest of sparks made it worth the trial.

"How much gas in the tank of the launch?" I asked the woman.

"Nearly five gallons—we filled it today," she replied, and it was a point in our favor. Five gallons ought to keep that little motor on the gallop till morning.

I explained, "I propose to cut the hawsers and rely on the launch to hold the house-boat against the bank."

Her response was instant. "What am I to do?"

I had her fetch their ax and I showed her the places where the hawsers drew tautest over the edge of the deck. She was to cut them there when I gave her the word.

The launch was lashed snugly under the bows of the house-boat and headed up-stream. I climbed down into it and spun the motor. The machinery worked perfectly. The tiny screw bent to its task and I felt the launch quiver with the strain of it.

"Cut!" I shouted to Mrs. Jastrow and sent the ray of the torch up to give her light.

She swung the ax like an adept. The hawser at the stern parted with a single blow and two blows severed the other. The house-boat righted itself with a lurch and floated free while I pushed the motor to the very top of its capacity.

The fact that the current had brought me to the house-boat in the first place left me in no uncertainty as to the force I had against me in the fight to hold the unwieldy hulk. The river swirled up against the bank and swirled off and it pulled hard to take us with it. Yet for a while it looked as if my desperate device might turn

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the trick. The big sycamore served for a landmark; I flashed the ray of the searchlight out to it at intervals and it was apparent that we were holding our own. We held our own for the better part of an hour, and then another element entered into the reckoning.

With a jerk which I felt only too plainly the current suddenly began to run more swiftly. It was something I hadn't foreseen, yet now that it had come to pass I could understand it. Fifteen miles below, at the dam, the tidal wave had broken over the spillway some time since, and the tug of the waters so released had just now got back to us.

It was enough to turn the scale against us. I flashed the light and the big sycamore was nowhere to be seen. We were out in the river and headed for the dam and destruction.

WE SWAM helpless or nearly so. The best efforts of the launch to gain steerageway for the heavy house-boat availed little, and that little went for naught in the pitchy darkness. For a while I hoped that the current might deposit us in some bend of the banks, but the water was too high and turbulent, and though we struck against headland after headland it was only to veer off without grounding. As often as that happened I flung out a looped line on the chance that it might catch over some rock or stump or other projection, but it caught nothing.

The woman had gone back into the cabin after cutting the hawsers. I expected her to come out when she felt the house-boat in motion, but she didn't. The growing certainty that we weren't going to ground sent my thoughts back to the desperate expedient of taking to the launch and abandoning the house-boat, and with it in mind I climbed up to knock at the door once more. But as I did so we crashed against the bank with the launch first to strike, and when we veered off it was a wreck.

I gave up. I didn't knock, for now I had nothing to tell the woman except that we were doomed. But even as my last faint hope went glimmering the wet leaves of a tree switched me across the face and sooner than I could determine what that signified the boat slid into a mass of green branches and fetched up so suddenly that I was almost thrown off my feet.

It had come about quite simply. The bends of the river were mostly high, rocky formations, but there were exceptions. Well down toward the dam the stream doubled around a low spit, heavily wooded over. The water rose high enough that night to clear the spit, whereupon the current shifted and instead of doubling the end shot straight across. There we had lodged, in the tree-tops.

I don't know whether the others slept—I didn't. I could plainly hear the thunder of the deluge plunging over the spillway less than a mile below and the sound was too suggestive of what might have been to be very soothing.

MY HUNCH got lost in the shuffle. I was ashamed of it. When in the light of the night's disclosures I considered the grounds upon which I had thought Jastrow a crook, I wondered how I could have deemed them sufficient. I was ashamed of myself, while as for the gossips in Donovan, they disgusted me. To them I might have explained why the Jastrows behaved as they did and particularly I might have cleared up the incident of mystery, but I didn't think it worth while. Besides I had a mind to respect the secret, in consideration of the manner in which it had been divulged to me.

A party came with a steam-tug early in the morning and under my direction the house-boat was returned to its former moorings and safely made fast there. I found the woman another launch wherein she might come and go. In short I didn't desist till I had done what I could to make her comfortable without need to ask help of the villagers.

She thanked me with tears in her eyes.

I overstayed my leave a day or two, but the chief laid it to the storm and was satisfied without further explanation. I never mentioned Jastrow to him. He had other work waiting for me and put me at it forthwith.

All of which I am prompted to recount by something I have just read in the newspaper, and here it is:

Peoria, July 9.—Through information furnished by a colored servant whose conscience revolted at his determination to go into the business of making contraband whisky, officers of the secret service have run down the most versatile if not the cleverest crook of recent years. He has several aliases but is best known as Nelson Jastrow.

For some time past Jastrow has been living with his wife and the colored girl in a house-boat on Big Chuck Lake in the hills of Arkansas. He was arrested there and a complete and very effective outfit for coining money was found aboard the boat.

Counterfeiting was only part of Jastrow's trade, however. A search of the boat brought to light ten $10,000 Liberty Bonds which have been identified as part of the loot stolen from the mail between Chicago and St. Louis about a year ago.

It appears that Jastrow has been a very successful burglar, too. He has the name of being able to open any ordinary safe by laying the tips of his fingers against the door just over the lock, his sense of touch being so highly developed that he can feel the jar of the falling tumblers.

The enormous profits in whisky since the country went dry tempted Jastrow to set up a still in the house-boat, and it was his undoing. The negro girl is an ardent prohibitionist and she refused to stand for the booze.

Just one thing more and I'm done. I hand it to that woman. The lie about the crippled

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sister was ingenious and she put it over with true artistry, but what impresses me is her nerve in standing by it the way she did. She and the girl might have climbed the bank and there was a chance that they might have taken to the launch and got away, but she chose in the face of what looked at the moment little better than certain death to stand pat and stay with the house-boat.

As I say, I hand it to her.

THE SUN-GOD TRAIL*

by EDGAR YOUNG

Author of "The Master Plotter," "The No-Good Guy," etc.

JACOB ZENT was full of curiosity, the spirit of adventure. In school he had struggled to find the extreme opposite of each thing taught him. Having found it and casting an average, he came very near arriving at the true facts.

For instance, when the history class was studying the chapters concerning the American revolution he secured an English version of it and asked his teacher so many embarrassing questions that he came near getting expelled. He would have been equally able to ask an English teacher similar questions with similar results had he been an English boy, for all histories are biased.

It seems that the man capable of writing a fair history has either not yet been born or failed to have his books pass the school-book censorship; that unseen force that stands over Youth's groping brain with a club. Sunday-school buncombe had driven him into science and philosophy and utter unbelief. From both sides of the story he had extracted a kernel of truth and faith that satisfied the alchemy of his soul.

When he desired knowledge of a thing his quest was tireless, and when he did not desire it no power could force it upon him. It is in this manner he became interested in the Incas of Peru. A few lines were all his school history had given and these, having been written during the ill-feeling antecedent to the Spanish-American War, were aimed to demonstrate the bloodthirstiness of the Spanish race.

By writing letters to the professor of Spanish in Yale University he learned the names of old Spanish histories dealing with the conquest, obtained these from the New York Public Library through a friend who held a card and translated them with a lot of hard work by the aid of a large Spanish dictionary ordered from a mail-order house in Chicago.

These had impelled him further to read the Church's explanation of such barbarity, for the Church and the State were one at the time. Finding both to be biased, he resolved to read the Inca side of it.

He was six months translating the "Real Comentarios de los Incas, Reyes del Peru," the work of the half-breed Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega, who was born in Cuzco on the twelfth of April, 1539, of the Inca princess, Isabel Yupanqui Ñusta, by the Conquistador Garcilaso de la Vega, and who was residing in Spain at the time he wrote the history, which was published in 1609. Zent claimed the facts had been distorted by a rigid Church and State censorship if not by the writer himself, who had accepted the religion and country of his father.

This is where adventure, curiosity, caused him to pack up his few belongings and leave the

* *This is an Off-the-Trail Story. See first contents page.*

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small mountain Virginia town en route for the scene of the great tragedy in the high valleys of the Andes.

He rode the day-coach of an L. & N. train to New Orleans, went by steerage to Panama and thence by deck-passage to Callao. It was only a trolley-ride to Lima, the old Spanish capital of South America.

HE RENTED a one-roomed hut on Calle Conventillo, cleaned and white-washed it within, bought a hammock and small sheet-iron stove that burned charcoal to cook his food over, and began digging for the facts. He was surprized that he found allies among the keen-brained Catholic priests of the city and among the Franciscan monks.

The fact was forced into his brain that there is a strange democracy existing among soldiers of intellectual truth and that they pry out each other's secrets by a kind of seventh sense, fight what they consider Untruth, and help what they consider Truth.

It was men of this kind who procured hidden manuscripts giving facts not allowed to be printed after the conquest. Among these were "The True Confessions Made to Philip II" by a conscience-stricken *conquistador* on his death-bed.

This told how the Incas and their subjects, the Quechuas, had been living in a much more moral manner and had a better government than the Spaniards themselves back in Spain, that no crime nor poverty had existed and that the conquest had been made by lying, trickery and knavery, and that the accounts given by the *conquistadores* were fables that all of them had sworn to uphold.

This account was the first story written in the Spanish language that Zent credited. He believed that this man, on his death-bed with the fear of hell's fire tormenting his soul, had not prevaricated.

The amount of work that Jacob Zent did was amazing. He spent days poring over musty papers and drawings. Among others of these he found further proof that the Incas had not practised human sacrifice or any of the barbarities the conquerors had charged them with and that they had ruled the Indians by a system of love and service, the like of which had never existed before on the earth; also that they were far more advanced in religion and philosophy than the Spaniards themselves.

Strange to say, tracing back to the first two Incas, Manco Capac and Mama Coya Occlo Huaco, who had appeared garbed in strange clothing and possessing immense ears, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, delving into their teachings and finding whence came those large ears, he discovered them to have been of the common stock from which the present day Persians and Hindus came, and that their religion when they landed had been sun-worship of the exact type that existed in ancient Iruania, several hundred years B.C.

At this time the Iruanians controlled a great portion of what is now China. By tracing back against the North Pacific current on an eighteen-inch globe he could imagine from what point they had been cast adrift. The *andenes*, terraces, in the Andean valleys are similar to those of parts of Asia.

The teachings of Manco Capac and Mama Occlo and the customs they started were identical with those of the old scriptures of Jacob Zent's own Bible. Right here he made a discovery that was unknown up to that time. Later he dug out that the religion of the Incas had evolved; that the Emperor Huanya Capac had taught that the sun was no god, but a servant and manifestation of God and obeyed divine laws as he himself did.

Not only had the religion of the Incas evolved up to the stage of the religion of the conquerors but far ahead of it. The philosophy of the Incas had reached the conclusions of Mr. Herbert Spencer many hundred years before the advent of the Spaniard, and upon these scientific facts they had built a scheme of metaphysics that was amazing.

Records of this had been handed down by means of the knotted cords or *quipus*. The writing of thoughts by means of letters and words had been dispensed with. A certain way of tying a knot in a certain colored cord meant hundreds of words. In this manner it was possible for a *quipucamayu*, knot-reader, to digest the entire total of another man's thought in short order, and consequently the thought-processes of the Incas had become extremely rapid, dealing more with the spirit than the letter.

Jacob Zent learned that not only was the Inca religion the parent religion of the one that had been taught him in Sunday-school, which had sprung from the Catholic, but that it was the religion that would be taught hundreds of years hence in his own country when they had mastered Herbert Spencer and other philosophers and scientists.

The crusader priests had been guilty of patricide of their own faith and at the same time had killed the offspring of their own faith. It was sad but true. This also was unknown and unsuspected until it was unearthed by Jacob Zent.

Compared with the Incas, the Spaniards were the rankest of barbarians. Their evolution had been that of warriors and not of thinkers. The Incas also had evolved along this line as far as they had been compelled to, and were prepared to withstand attack from any nation in Asia.

The European struggle had forced some brain to the discovery of firearms. This discovery

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had wrought the ruin of the Incas, for a chuckle-headed fool armed with a gun can slay a philosopher armed with a bronze sword.

Jacob Zent had evolved for himself the exact religion taught by the Incas at the time of the conquest four hundred years before he was born. Thinking himself to be modern, he had been proved of a past age. He resolved he would find any Incas now living and having learned what they knew, would try to build from that.

With this in view he began to study the Quechua language. He obtained grammars and books from the priests, written in that language, and began to apply himself to them. These had been written phonetically from the spoken words of the people.

Having mastered them, he prepared to move to Cuzco, the ancient Inca capital. When he shook hands with his allies in Lima they pressed a packet into his hands with instructions not to open it until he was on the boat for Mollendo.

This packet he later found to contain Peruvian *sóles* to the amount of several hundred dollars. He had been so obsessed with his idea that he had not noted his supply of cash was running low. He vowed he would break new ground and make still further discoveries in Cuzco.

AT CAJAMARCA, on the way up from the coast, he paused long enough to seek out the room in which Atahualpa's ransom had been collected. Dr. Mozans and the prefect had measured it. It was thirty-two feet nine inches long, twenty feet nine inches wide, and ten feet nine inches high.

This room had been filled with gold "up to the white line, the height of a man and a half from the floor," an amount worth between seventeen and twenty-one millions of dollars. This gold had been shipped to Spain along with many other millions collected that same year.

Arriving at Cuzco, Zent rented a room from an old Quechua couple and arranged to take his meals with them. They were surprized that he spoke their language and that he wished to speak it at all times. They were yet more surprized when he made outward demonstrations of their own religion.

He did this to satisfy conclusions he had arrived at; that while outwardly accepting the religion of the conquerors, the Quechuas were not inwardly doing so, but were holding on to their belief as they were to their own language. He was not deceiving this old couple, for their religion was really his own.

Now he began getting close to the facts. He learned as much as the aged Quechua couple dared to impart and went abroad from early until late throughout the city. He talked with old women and girls in the market-places, to llama-drivers; he trotted beside men who carried bundles of moss into the city; he made friends with children. He openly spoke that which the Quechuas were afraid to voice, of the good old days of the Inca reign.

As yet he had not seen a single Inca. The people he had been meeting were of the subjects of the Incas. The Inca blood had been kept pure and unmixed down through the ages by a process of advanced eugenics. Quechuas he saw in plenty and also men of Spanish-Quechua descent.

These types he knew easily by racial characteristics. He was searching for an ascetic Iruanian type from which had sprung both fanatical Persians and fanatical Hindus, civilizers of mankind.

He expected trouble from the priests and local officials, men of Spanish and mixed Spanish descent, and was surprized when he did not encounter it. One night a note was passed into his hand by a priest who did not pause. It said that word had come to them from friends in Lima to give aid if such was needed and that they would control any opposition that might arise among the political officials.

So Zent went about scanning faces curiously and asking questions. Strange types began to seek him out. Some of these were clad as peddlers and vendors, others as field-laborers, others as vagabonds. When he talked they looked into his eyes and searched his soul.

Finally he walked abroad no more and sat in the doorway of the Quechua hut, and these men came and talked with him gravely. They were Incas and were making sure that this stranger was true at heart. Often beneath the rags of their disguises he saw garments of extreme richness, ornamented with gold and jewels.

This was done with purpose to see if cupidity lurked in his heart. Riches of gold and jewels had no place in the make-up of Jacob Zent. His was a search for the pure refined honey of wisdom.

One night at dusk he sat in the doorway. The Indian sat silent by his side, chewing a wad of *cuca* leaves. The aged wife was clearing away the remains of the scanty meal. Zent was humming a verse of the Harvest Song, from the "Drama of Ollantay."

"Ama pisco micupchu
Nustallaipa chacranta
Manan hina tucuichu
Hillacunan saranta
Tuya-allay, Tuya-allay."

"Forbear, O bird,
To destroy the crops
Of my princess.
Do not thus steal
The grain which is hers.
Tuya-allay, Tuya-allay."

The Quechua sighed. Suddenly he gazed past Jacob Zent. His hand moved upward in

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the secret sign of obedience to his king. Zent looked. A man who appeared to be a beggar stood on the threshold, regarding him curiously. He wore no hat; his hair, which was as white as snow, hung to his shoulders. His face bore the wrinkles of great age. But his eyes were bright from the great flame that burned in his soul. His voice was strong and hearty.

"Ah! To you is pleasing the songs of the *haravaecs*, who made light the court with literary gems? What think you of the third verse? Please sing it, brother." Zent did so and the Inca joined in; the old woman, not knowing what was transpiring at the door, adding her voice in a thin piping treble:

"Phurantatac mascariy
Cuchusaccmi silluta
Pupasccayquim ccantapas
Happiscayquin ccantapas
Tuya-allay, Tuya-allay."

"Your wings shall be clipped
Your feet shall be bound
You shall be tied
And closely encaged.
Tuya-allay, Tuya-allay."

"What think you of the fate of the little bird called Tuya? A just fate, no? That little drama was written before the time of Tupac Cauri, the seventy-eighth ruler, for it was he who forbade further use of paper and written words. As a riddle to you, what is your answer to that verse?"

Jacob Zent arose and lifted his hand in the manner of the Inca oath-taking.

"O Spirit of the Universe,
Thou, who hast placed thy servant
The Sun, to give us life,
And thy servant the Moon,
To move the tides on the seas,
And give life to night-growing
Plants and flowers,
Witness
That my heart is pure of evil design."

The Quechua had fallen on his face and groveled in the dust at the mention of the divine spirit. The Inca touched Zent's arm. Zent followed the Inca a few paces and came abreast of him.

Side by side they walked down the narrow street. They turned a corner and a few doors below the Inca paused before a mean hut and pushed open the unfastened door. A dim light shone from within. He bade Zent enter and shut the door when they had both entered.

A TABLE, a chair and a rude couch were the only furnishings. The Inca opened the door leading into another room. Several old men were tying knots in a great cluster of *quipus* that hung upon the walls. So intent were they upon their work that they were not aware of the entrance of the Inca and his companion. Zent noticed that these were some of the men who had come to talk with him in the streets and in the doorway. At a word from the Inca they stood up smiling.

"I have brought the adventurer. As you know he has fought ahead of his evolution. He has reached the stage that our forefathers had arrived at in the years of the engulfment of our race by the barbarians. His eyes and heart and mind are open. He is full of sublime curiosity, spirit of adventure and knowledge.

"Can we not lead forward the apex of his thought until he has become one of us? It will be practise for us in the development of the benighted mind. His thought, though far inferior to ours, is hundreds of years ahead of that of these poor Quechuas, our loyal subjects. And—who knows?—being young and strong, and with the added equipment we give him, he may be able to make new deductions for the benefit of mankind. I will go with him tomorrow and make known to him the young men and girls of our race who live secluded in this city; the few we are keeping alive for the breeding of millions when the time comes."

"What mean you, the breeding of millions?" asked Jacob Zent.

"We Incas do not weep for the dead. We weep for the unborn—the billions who are clamoring for birth. There are but few of us left, but enough. When the time is ripe, with these few and with simple science and incubation, by which one woman may mother twelve children in a year, we shall flood the earth with our kind.'"

"There is no room upon the planet for so much life. It is necessary that we have war and disease and pestilence to prune back the growth such as it is now," dissented Jacob Zent.

The Inca and his companions laughed heartily. Then the man who had brought him spoke gently, as if he were speaking to a child:

"Poor, poor, fool. Our education of you is indeed a mighty task. Your thoughts are savage. Do you not know that the sky is high and the earth is deep and if forced for space one billion men or more with families may live upon and beneath and above one single acre of ground; and that another acre could support them?

"Think you of the vast unsettled spaces in South America, some of them as large as your own country. Think you of the bottom and surface of the sea which covers three-fourths of the planet. Of the mountaintops, from which cables might be swung to support aerial houses. Think you of the interior of the earth and the sixty miles of air overhead!

"Do you not trust anything to the evolution of brains among the billions to be born to solve

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such problems as may confront them? The sun has stored enough force for centuries. It is the force of the sun you consume in each particle of food. The unborn billions shall not go empty-bellied but shall feed better than we.

"The problems shall find their answers as they always have done. And when this earth does not suffice for Man, perhaps then he shall be required to seek lands on other planets. Ever and ever Man shall go ahead and not backward. Just ahead of the most forward tip of the vine of Life shall go curiosity, the spirit of adventure peering the way that all shall be well and the vine shall have support. Birth-control was exploded by our philosophers hundreds of years before the conquest!"

The Inca waited for Zent to speak.

"Tomorrow I shall plant weeping willows for the unborn," he said.

Seeing that he was sincere in his desire for knowledge, the Incas began explaining the knotted *quipus*.

All through the night he studied and through succeeding days and nights, pausing only to sleep and eat. His eagerness for learning was on a par with the eagerness of the Incas to impart it. It was a month before the entire total had been learned.

JACOB ZENT looked upon the Incas with profound sorrow in his heart. His head ached from much study. His nerves were ragged and worn.

"The ultimate truth ye have not yet reached. As far as ye have traveled the start has not yet been made. My heart is troubled and I am discouraged."

He seated himself upon a rude couch and stared upon them mournfully. The Inca who had brought him came and placed a hand on his shoulder.

"The unborn; it is they who shall solve more and more of the truth. We are but gropers. It is they who shall take what paths we have made and use them to chop farther into the unknown and unknowable. Each generation shall learn something of the secret. Evolution moves ahead and not backward.

"Years hence men will look back upon men like you and I as dumb, ignorant beasts without learning. Yet it is with our crude facts that they themselves have been made wise. Ahead of them shall go curiosity, spirit of adventure, and later generations shall judge *them* ignorant. Down through endless time, perhaps the secret shall be solved and the searchers come face to face with it. And should they do so it is we who have done our part to help them."

Jacob Zent's jaws set grimly.

"I shall keep faith with the unborn," he declared stoutly.

He arose and solemnly shook hands with the kind old men and came out and went to the Quechua hut for his belongings. Then he started on the long trip back to the United States.

THE BLACKLEG REMITTANCE-MAN

by **RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER**

CROOKED sprig of an upright line
Though in the saddle as straight as a pine;
Yellower far than the slyest of Japs,
Yet in appearance the whitest of chaps;
Drag on his people's purse and name,
But prop of many a bunco game;
Equally ready to borrow or plunge,
A sport, a spender and a sponge.

False in peace, false to the core,
Though true to his race when called to war;
Glib as a guide on Chihuahua or Nome,
But strangely mum when the topic's Home;
Hard to corner, for smooth of tongue;
Stinging the trustful, but seldom stung:
Dress-suit hobo, con man, pest,
Butterfly-leech of the big Southwest.

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A Scout for Virginia

by Hugh Pendexter

A FOUR-PART STORY
PART III

Author of "Red Belts," "Kings of the Missouri," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

IN 1774 the Virginians, having given up all hope for a friendly penetration and settlement of the lands beyond the western frontier, were making preparations for the ensuing struggle. War was the inevitable outcome of the contest between two alien races, each determined on the same prize and each made bitter by the memories of fearful wrongs.

For the Indians were not alone in committing outrages. A certain element among the backwoodsmen, often men who had suffered cruelly at the hands of the Indians, made it a practise to wipe out all redskins with whom they came in contact, whether friendly or otherwise. And in revenge the Indians were not always particular in their choice of white victims.

I, Basdell Morris, messenger between the commandant at Fort Pitt and his lordship the Earl of Dunmore, royal governor of Virginia, was resting at noon at the junction of the Monongahela and the Cheat, when I saw an Indian floating down the river in a canoe. Recognizing him as Bald Eagle, a friendly Delaware, I hailed him. Simultaneously with my hail I heard a shot followed by a panther scream, and Shelby Cousin, an Indian-hater, emerged from the bushes. But his shot was wasted for Bald Eagle had already been killed by some other Indian-hater who had set him adrift as a ghastly joke. I spoke to Cousin about his attacks on friendly Indians and told him what would happen if the peaceful Delawares should be driven into joining the hostile Shawnee and Mingo bands.

"A redskin," Cousin retorted, "is a wild animal. When I was a boy I came home from squirrel-shooting, and there I found my father and mother sculped and my little sister stolen. How would you feel?"

Leaving Cousin, I proceeded to Howard's Creek where all the people from the surrounding countryside were busy erecting a fort. There Isaac Crabtree killed the Indian, Cherokee Billy, for no reason. The murder pleased the younger whites; but the older men looked grave, for the brother of the dead Indian was Oconostota, the powerful chief of the friendly Cherokees.

From here I hurried toward Salem to see Patricia Dale, whom I had not laid eyes on for three years. Now and then a burned cabin, and at night a glare against the sky, indicated the tragedies of those desperate times. The Grisdols' cabin was only a little way off my trace; so I turned aside to warn them against the Indians. At some distance in the woods I saw the form of a bear; and, suspicious at the calm behavior of my horse, I dismounted and stalked the animal. As I drew near, the bear stood up, revealing a Shawnee warrior. I shot him and took from his belt four fresh scalps. The Grisdols needed no warning.

Cousin, attracted by the sound of my shot, unexpectedly appeared and reported Black Hoof and his Pawnee braves on my trail. Together we hastened to the half-burned Grisdol cabin, where we prepared to defend ourselves. The cries of the Indians closing in on us suddenly ceased as the petulant voice of a man called out, and "Baby" Kirst appeared in the clearing. Kirst, a giant in strength but a child mentally, was feared by the red men. They suffered him to go unharmed, believing him to be under the protection of the Great Spirit. At his arrival they fled; and, the danger being over, I parted from Cousin and resumed my journey.

As I neared Salem I fell in with one John Ward who as a child had been captured by the Indians and was but now making his escape from Black Hoof. I hoped that he might give me some word concerning the fate of Cousin's sister, but to my disappointment he knew nothing about her. I left him at Salem, duty overcoming my keen desire to stay there, and went on to Richfield, where I reported and delivered my dispatches to Governor Dunmore and Colonel Lewis.

On my next trip with dispatches to the governor I learned that Ericus Dale, Patsy and John Ward had left on horseback two days ago. I started for the Davis cabin on the frontier, where I hoped to

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find them, and on the way met Jesse Hughes, a daredevil Indian-fighter. He said that the Dales had passed him on the trace and that the Indians were again on the warpath. He accompanied me to the Davis cabin, where we found the Dales and John Ward with the settlers.

That night the Indians attacked and Dale, boldly going to the redskins with belts and trinkets, was acclaimed as the Pack-Horse-Man, true friend of the Indians, and granted a parley with Black Hoof himself. The result of his persuasion was that the Indians withdrew, and Dale triumphantly returned to the settlement.

Patsy, glorying in her father's triumph, was offended with me for siding with the Indian-fighters and scoffing at Dale's peacemaking.

I followed the trace back toward Greenbriar, meeting on the way an Indian warrior and a squaw. Near by in concealment stood Shelby Cousin, his rifle bearing on the warrior. The squaw, catching a glimpse of Cousin, shouted. "You coward!" in excellent English. Then we saw that she was a white woman.

"Shelby?" the girl spoke questioningly, and Cousin recognized her as his long lost sister.

She told us that the warrior was her husband.

"I am a Shawnee," she said. "My heart is red."

Shelby tried to persuade her to return to the whites, but while my hand restrained him from shooting his red brother-in-law she clung to her savage life.

At the Davis cabin I found that the Dales and Ward had gone down the trail to the Clinch. With the hostile Indians so numerous in that section of the woods, I mounted my horse and hastened after them.

CHAPTER VIII

IN ABB'S VALLEY

ORIOLES and mocking-birds sang in the openings, and startled deer fled before our advance as Shelby Cousin and I rode for the Clinch. The heat of July was tempered by a breeze out of the north, and the heavens were filled with hurrying white argosies. So it had ever been since the white man came to these pleasant ridges and rich bottom-lands; perfume, song, gracious valleys, and the lurking red evil.

Cousin had regained his self-control overnight and outwardly appeared to be thoroughly composed. He talked but little, and then only when I took the lead. I refrained from mentioning the tragedy of yesterday and the sun was noon-high before he brought the matter up.

"I couldn't kill that feller," he abruptly informed me.

There was no preface to indicate whom he meant, but I knew and nodded sympathetically.

"An' I'd ruther kill him then all the rest o' the Injuns 'tween here'n Detroit," he added after a long pause.

"She will never come back to us?" I asked; for he had given no details of his interview with his sister.

"She'll never come back. For a time I'd a mind to drag her away, but she was so cold to me, so Injun-like in her way of lettin' me know it wouldn't do no good, that I give it up. You see she was only a child when captured. Women caught when much older'n her have gone for to choose a wigwam to a cabin."

"Do you wish I had shot him?"

"No. If it could happen in a open fight—that's different. It wouldn't do any good to hurt her by killin' him. But I wish he was dead!"

We stopped and ate and rode several miles before either of us spoke again. Then I said—

"There's a girl ahead, about your age."

He was disturbed to hear it and I feared he would wish to leave me.

"I don't want her captured by Indians," I added.

"God forbid it!" he hoarsely cried.

Having prepared him for seeing Patricia, I shifted his line of thought by asking, "What do you think of John Ward?"

"Injun."

I said nothing and after a few minutes he went on:

"Took by Injuns when a little boy, just like Tavenor Ross and George Collet was took. I've heard traders tell about the three of 'em. When they're took so young they grow up just as much Injun as if they was born red. Ward's that way. Must be. Look at the sister I lost!"

"But Ward comes back to settlements. He even crosses the mountains. He says he escaped."

"He wouldn't be travelin' round these parts if he was a 'scaped prisoner. As for crossin' the mountains he might 'a' gone for to see what he could see. Cornstalk has spies all up an' down the frontier. I 'low them two we met yesterday was bent on spyin'. God! That's a awful thought! But I ain't got no sister. It was a red woman we seen. She'n her man was spyin'. If not that why should they be makin' east into the mountains? I 'low he was to stay hid while 'nother 'scaped prisoner rode down into some settlement."

From that speech on I do not remember that he spoke of his sister as being any kin of his. When he must mention her he usually styled her, "That woman who's turned red."

To get his thoughts away from her I rattled on about my trip to Richfield and told of my experiences in returning over the mountains. After I had narrated Hughes' quick action in saving me from an assassin's bullet Cousin jerked up his head and said—

"Moccasin, one you give to that there young woman we're now followin'?"

I nodded, and he continued:

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"I 'low it was John Ward who tried to pot you. He stole the moccasin and sneaked back an' laid the trap. Prob'ly laid it for whoever come along without knowin' who would walk into it. You was mighty lucky to have Hughes there." I had never connected Ward with that attempt on my life.

"The Dales believe Ward to be what he pretends—an escaped prisoner," I said.

"Course they do," sighed the boy. "The country's full of fools. After he's led 'em to the stake an' they begin to roast they'll wake up an' reckon that there's something wrong with his white blood."

His matter of fact way of expressing it made my blood congeal. It was unthinkable to imagine Patsy Dale in the hands of the Indians. I urged my horse to a sharper clip, but Cousin warned me:

"No use hurryin'. Save your nag for the time when you'll need him mighty bad. I 'low we can overtake 'em afore anything happens."

We had discovered no fresh Indian-signs. Black Hoof and his braves were far north of us. We knew scouts were ranging up the Clinch and Holston, and that the people were forting from Fort Chiswell to the head of the Holston, and that practically all the settlers had left Rich Valley between Walker's Mountain and the north fork of the Holston.

Nearly all the settlers had come off the heads of Sandy and Walker's Creeks and were building forts at David Doack's mill on the Clinch and on the headwaters of the middle fork of the Holston, as well as at Gasper Kinder's place in Poor Valley.

Cornstalk must know the time was near when the whites would send an army against the Shawnee towns north of the Ohio, and he was too cunning a warrior to risk sending many of his men into southwestern Virginia. Black Hoof was there with a large force, but he could not tarry without leaving the Scioto towns uncovered.

Therefore my opinion coincided with my companion's, once my first flurry of fear was expended. The Dales were in no immediate danger, and if any hostile band was below New River it would be a small one. Once more I allowed my horse to take his time. I began to find room for wondering how I was to overcome my embarrassment once we did come up with the Dales.

Ericus Dale would rant and indulge in abuse. Patricia would be remembering my lack of faith in her father's influence over the natives. She would want none of my company. But if Cousin and I could trail them unseen until they entered a small settlement at the head of the Bluestone, where they would be sure to pause before making for the head of the Clinch, we could pretend we were scouting far south and had met them by accident; then we could ride on ahead of them.

Their trail was simple to follow. The Dales were mounted and Ward was afoot and leading a pack-horse. We came to their several camps, and at each of these I observed the girl was wearing my moccasins. When Cousin would behold the small imprint his face would twist in anguish. Poor devil!

FOR three days we leisurely followed them, and each sunrise found me entertaining fewer fears for the girl's safety. We timed our progress so as to pitch our last camp within a mile of the settlement in Abb's Valley on the Bluestone, intending to reconnoiter it for signs of the Dales before showing ourselves.

The valley was about ten miles long and very narrow and possessing unusually fertile soil.

It was named after Absalom Looney, a hunter, who claimed to have discovered it. Cousin informed me there were three cabins and a small fort in the valley when he last visited it. At that time one of the families was planning to cross the mountains and sacrifice the Summer's planting.

"Mebbe they've all come off since then. Or them that's stayed may be all killed an' sculped by this time," he added.

"Whatever may have happened to the settlers is all finished by this time and there can be no danger for the Dales," I declared.

"I 'low they're packin' their worst danger along with 'em," he mumbled.

"Meaning John Ward?"

"Meaning him," was the terse answer.

This set all my fears to galloping again, and they rode each other close. What if Ward were the creature Cousin pictured him? Then he must have designs on the Dales, and he would persuade them to travel in a direction which would lead them into a trap. If Ward were "red" he already had planned just where he would bag his game.

Against this line of reasoning was our failure to discover fresh signs, and the fact that Black Hoof's band was making north. Then one fear drew ahead of all others, and I was thrown into a panic lest Ward plotted to count his coup unaided and would murder the trader and his daughter. I rose from the fire and announced my intention of proceeding to the valley settlement that night. I told Cousin my fears.

"That's just so much foolishness," he told me. "If Ward's up to them sort o' tricks he'd 'a' made his kill when only a few miles from Howard's Creek, when he was that much closer to Black Hoof's band. Then he'd 'a' sneaked north to j'in his red friends and dance his sculps. But we've found all their camps, and nothin' has happened. They're safe so far."

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It was near morning before I could sleep and I awoke at sunrise. Cousin was missing. I investigated and discovered he had gone on foot, so I assumed he was out to kill some meat to pack into the settlement. I prepared something to eat and finished my portion and was kneeling to drink from a spring when I heard him coming through the woods. He was running and making much noise, and I had a presentiment that something very evil had happened. Before he came into view he called my name sharply.

"All right! I'm here! What is it?" I answered.

"Devil's come for his pay!" he snapped as he burst through the last of the growth. "Only two miles west fresh tracks of big war-party makin' south. They're makin' for Abb's Valley. That white-Injun devil fixed it up. Goin' to gobble the settlers along with your fool friends. If we can't stop 'em they'll git every white in the valley sure's Sabba'day preachin'!"

Until that moment I had never dreamed of the exquisite torture that the threat of an Indian raid could induce. I secured my weapons and mounted without realizing what I was doing. My first coherent thought was one of amazement to behold Cousin stuffing smoked meat into his pack with one hand while the other held a tough morsel for his teeth to tear at. He ate like a famished wolf.

"Can't fight without some linin'," he mumbled. "An' we'll take what's left along. May git in a corner an' have mighty little time for cookin'."

I urged my horse into a gallop. Cousin tore after me, angrily calling on me to wait. I was in no mood to wait, and endeavored to get even more speed out of my animal. Then Cousin brought me to my senses by yelling:

"All right! Kill 'em if you want to!"

I pulled in and he drove alongside, crying:

"First thing you know you'll be runnin' into a nest o' them devils. Their path and our path draws together an' enters the valley as one path."

"But we must reach the valley ahead of them!"

"Can't be did," he discouraged. "Best we can do is to sneak up on 'em without bein' seen."

As a last hope I suggested—

"Perhaps after all they know nothing about the Dales."

"They know 'bout Abb's Valley. It's Black Hoof's band. Made off north, then swung back down here, keepin' clear o' Howard's Creek. If they clean out Abb's Valley they'll clean out the creek on their way home."

Scant consolation in all this. It was a great relief to reach the Bluestone and prepare for action. We spanceled our horses in a tiny opening well surrounded by woods. Cousin was familiar with the country and led the way. Instead of making for the mouth of the narrow valley we gained the end of one of its enclosing ridges and scouted along the slope.

When we halted and Cousin carefully parted the bushes I observed we were behind three cabins and high enough up the slope to see over them. The valley at this point was not more than fifty rods wide, and appeared to be even less because of the long walls stretching away for ten miles.

Some children were laughing at their play and were hidden from view so long as they kept close to the door of the middle cabin. A dog was growling and barking, but as he did not join the sport of the little ones we concluded he was tied. One of the red cabins, that nearest to the mouth of the valley, did not appear to be occupied.

Through the small window of the cabin farthest up the valley I glimpsed two persons moving about when they passed between the window and the open door. A few rods farther out toward the middle of the valley and nearer the Bluestone than the unoccupied cabin, were the four walls of what had been intended for a fort. It lacked the roof. For some reason the men had suspended work on it, being too few to complete it, or else deciding the cabins furnished sufficient protection.

THREE men, all strangers to me, now entered our line of vision as they walked out from the shelter of the middle cabin. Cousin told me their names. The tall man with the long black beard was Granville, one of the original settlers. He and his wife and two children lived in the middle cabin. A short, swarthy man was Nate Dicks. He had sent his family over the mountains and was staying behind to gather the season's crops, explained Cousin. The third man was along in years and walked with a limp.

"That's the old Englishman. All the name he goes by. No kin to any one on this side the ocean, he says. He lives with the Granvilles. The empty cabin belonged to the Drakes. They pulled out early this Spring. Dicks lives in the t'other-end cabin."

"I make out at least two people in there now," I murmured.

"They'll be the Dales. Dicks prob'ly sleepin' in the Granville cabin."

My heart behaved badly for a minute.

"Listen to that pup!" softly exclaimed Cousin, his brows drawing down. "The fools have him tied up, an' they ain't got sense 'nough to hark to what he's tryin' to tell 'em."

"We're here ahead of the Indians. Let's go down," I urged.

"Wait! Look across!" He pointed to the wall of woods opposite our hiding-place. John Ward had broken cover and was stalking

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toward the cabins. The black cloth he wore around his head gave him a sinister, piratical appearance and his feet tracked like an Indian's.

I would have descended the slope but Cousin clutched my arm, whispering:

"If there ain't no Injuns across the valley we can afford to wait a bit. If there is, our goin' down would hurry up their attack. It won't do to call out an' scare 'em so they'll scatter. As they are now they can fort themselves in the shake of a dog's tail."

Two women, Mrs. Granville and her sister, now walked back of the middle cabin and picked up some wood. Both were barefooted, and I was close enough to read the expression of constant fear on each face. As they stooped for the wood their gaze was continually roving over the woods on our ridge, and often their fingers fumbled for a fagot while their eyes persisted in examining the forest.

Now Dale and Patsy emerged from their cabin and walked to meet Ward. Cousin groaned aloud as he beheld the girl. There was something in her appearance to remind him of his lost sister. Ericus Dale greeted Ward with a wide flourish of his hand. Ward was emotionless as a Shawnee chief. Granville and Dicks hurried to join the three, anxious no doubt to learn the result of Ward's scouting.

His report seemed to please the men, for Granville laid aside his rifle and began chopping a long log into fireplace lengths. Dicks walked toward the middle cabin, lustily singing:

"Ye patriot souls who love to sing,
What serves your country and your king,
In wealth, peace, and royal estate;
Attention give whilst I rehearse
A modern fact in jingling verse."

This song, six or seven lengthy stanzas in all, was written by Mr. George Campbell, an Irish gentleman, and was popular along the frontier. It was sung to the tune of the "Black Joke," and commemorated the successful efforts of Captain James Smith to prevent Philadelphia traders from sending weapons of war to the northwest tribes shortly after the treaty of 1765 was concluded.

Dicks was finishing the first stanza as he entered the cabin. He broke off sharply to rebuke the dog. Soon he came out with a bag. At about a hundred yards from the cabin, and farther up the valley than any of them, was the lick-block. Dicks was walking toward this. Several horses broke from the growth across the valley and ran toward the cabins.

"Almost act like they was skeered," whispered Cousin.

"Coming in to be salted," I corrected as the horses swerved and galloped toward the block. Dicks was ambling along slowly and reverting to his song. The dog suddenly darted from the cabin and streaked after Dicks, a piece of rawhide trailing from his neck. As he ran he made a great outcry. Dicks was very angry to have his vocal efforts interrupted, and he halted and swung the bag of salt in an attempt to hit the dog, all the while commanding him to go back. The horses were now at the block and stepping about uneasily.

"——! I never guessed that! Come on! —— will bust loose in a minute!" groaned Cousin.

We started to slide down the bank, when a terrible tragedy took place before our eyes. As Dicks was emptying the salt on to the lick-block the horses sprang back and bolted in alarm, and an Indian's topknot, decorated with wild-turkey feathers, bobbed up from behind the block. Dicks seemed to be paralyzed. The savage struck him with his ax and the unfortunate man went down, dead before he lost his footing. In the next second the dog, a huge brute of mongrel breed, cleared the block and closed his jaws on the murderer's neck.

This was a signal for Cousin's prophecy to come true. A deafening chorus of howls burst from the woods opposite the cabins, and a volley of bullets rained among the settlers. Mrs. Granville and the two children dropped. The old Englishman, standing nearer the cabins, staggered and turned around two or three times. Granville, unharmed, picked up the body of his wife.

The old Englishman was very brave, for he limped forward and managed to gather up the children, one under each arm. Granville's sister was practical enough to secure her brother-in-law's rifle and ax. The three, with their dead, made for the middle cabin.

All this happened in the wink of an eye. The Dales and Ward, walking toward the end cabin when Dicks was killed, halted and stood as if stupefied. None of the bullets had reached them. The girl seized her father's arm and led him to shelter. He was unhurt, but he moved with shuffling steps, much like a tavern-loafer soggy from rum.

We ran to enter the nearest cabin, which happened to be Granville's, but the door was slammed and barred before we could round the corner.

"In here!" sharply cried Cousin, darting through the doorway of the empty cabin.

As I piled in after him I saw Patsy and Dale entering their cabin, but Ward, the white Indian, was running to cover up the valley. And not a savage had shown himself with the exception of the one who had counted coup at the lick-block. This fellow was still in sight and extremely busy.

With our door ajar we watched the ghastly struggle between the faithful mongrel and the assassin. The Indian had lost his ax but had managed to draw his knife. The dog's teeth were buried in his throat before he could get his blade loose. I raised my rifle but Cousin

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laughed and knocked it aside and cried:

"Let him make his kill! It's his coup!"

The warrior staggered clear of the block, his desperate plight blinding him to all else. His eyes were protruding. He stabbed blindly. I cried out in pain as I saw the knife sink to the hilt. But the faithful beast had locked his jaws and the weight of his body was already ripping the red throat open. Dead dog and dying warrior fell side by side. The dog had counted the first coup for the whites.

NOW we caught our first view of the enemy. A long thin line of Shawnees emerged from the woods, running and leaping and jumping from side to side, sinking behind stumps and vanishing behind the scattered trees.

"We've got time to make the ridge back o' here," spoke up Cousin. "We's fools to come in here. S'pose we go."

"You go! I must stick," I told him.

"We can do 'em more good out in the open than by bein' cooped up in here," he quietly reasoned.

"You go. I can't leave the girl."

"Then bar the door," he commanded.

I did so, and through a loophole knocked over a savage who had paused in the open to brandish a war-ax thickly decorated with either feathers or scalps.

"Good! We'll make a fine fight of it!" grimly said Cousin as he stepped from a loophole at the back of the cabin. "It's too late for us to make the ridge now. It's crawlin' with the vermin."

His bearing was exceedingly cheerful as he posted himself at the front of the cabin, his double-barrel rifle ready for a snap-shot. He fired the two barrels almost together, and laughed boisterously.

"Two tryin' to hide behind one small tree," he explained. "Got one dead an' sp'iled t'other."

As yet not a shot had been fired from the other two cabins. A voice called from the Granville cabin. I found a chink in the wall and beheld the face of the Englishman peering from the small end window.

"Who's there?" he kept demanding in a shrill voice.

"Two white scouts. Get to shooting!"

He could not see me but he heard me, and vanished to help in the defense. Cousin had reloaded and was watching the valley closely. Bullets were plunking into the log walls, but I knew none of the savages were exposing themselves, else my companion would be shooting. From the Granville cabin several shots were fired without any effect so far as we could make out. Then again the Englishman was calling us. I went forward.

"Hear what I say?" he cried.

I answered that we could.

"Ericus Dale says for us to stop shooting or he can't save us," he informed us.

"He can't save himself!" I yelled back.

"He thinks he can save all of us."

"He couldn't save the man at the lick-block," I reminded.

"Aye. There's sorry truth in that."

"This valley's a trap. John Ward, the white Indian, led him and his daughter into it," I shouted.

"God help and pity us!" he groaned. Then more calmly, "Ward came back from the woods this morning and said there were no signs of Indians."

"He met them and talked with them, and planned how they should surprize you people. The warrior at the lick-block knew Dicks would discover him, so he showed himself and made his kill."

"Aye. That is reasonable thinking."

"What losses in there?" I asked. I thrust my knife-blade between the logs so he might know where I was standing and cease rolling his eyes in his efforts to locate me.

His old face screwed up in pain.

"Mistress Granville and the two children, shot dead. Perhaps it's best that way. I'm wounded—that don't count. You going to keep on shooting?"

"As long as we can pull trigger."

"I'll tell Granville. He wants to save his sister if he can."

"Then he must fight. Tell him so," I warned.

I turned back to Cousin. He was scowling savagely through his peephole. "Take the back side'n watch for signs on the ridge," he mumbled. "Them out front are huggin' dirt an' not tryin' to git nearer. They're waitin' for somethin'."

At the back of the cabin I found a tiny chink and applied my eye. My first thought was that a comet was streaming down into my face. The long war-arrow, weighted with a blazing mass of pitch-smeared moss, stuck in a log a few inches below my peephole. From the ridge came a howl of triumph.

By thrusting my knife-blade through the hole and against the shaft of the arrow I managed to dislodge it, and it burned itself out against the huge bottom log. We did not fear fire until the arrows stuck in the roof. The same thought was in Cousin's mind. He did not look around, but he had smelled the smoke and he directed—

"Climb up an' work the roof-poles apart a bit so's you can knock 'em off the roof when they land."

I soon had the poles slightly separated in two places. As I finished a dozen flying brands poured down on the Granville cabin and ours. One arrow lodged on our roof close to the eaves.

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Two were burning on the ridgepole of the Granville cabin. The others either stuck harmlessly in the logs or overshot and stood so many torches in the ground. By means of the table I scrambled back to the roof and managed to knock the menace to the ground. While I was thus engaged Cousin fired both barrels.

"What luck?" I asked as I jumped to the floor.

"Just bein' neighborly," he growled as he rapidly loaded. "Shot them two arrers off the next roof."

Suddenly the savage howling ceased; nor were there any more fire-arrows. Then the Englishman began shouting. He was once more calling us. I answered him and wriggled the knife-blade between the logs. Sure of my attention he loudly informed us:

"Dale passes the word for us to stop fighting. Says he's going to save us."

"To —— with Dale!" snarled Cousin, showing his teeth like a wolf.

"He's going out to talk with 'em," added the Englishman.

"——! what a fool!" lamented Cousin.

"He's going now," continued the Englishman.

I DARTED to Cousin's side and peered out. We heard the bar drop from the end cabin; then Dale came into view, walking with a swagger toward the concealed savages. In one hand he held up a string of white wampum. And as he slowly advanced he shouted in the Shawnee language:

"Do my brothers fire on their brother? Do they harm their brother's friends? Does the Pack-Horse-Man ask his red brothers to be kind only to have his words fall on dead ears? I bring you belts. My daughter in the cabin also brings belts to the Shawnees and Mingos and the Delawares."

"Let our white brother come close," called a deep guttural voice.

"That'll be Black Hoof himself," excitedly muttered Cousin, darting his gaze over the valley in search of the stone or log which hid the great chief from view.

"Don't shoot! They'll butcher him if you do!" I warned.

"They'll worse'n butcher him if I don't," gritted Cousin. Yet he held his fire, for the excellent reason he could see nothing to shoot at.

"Tell your people not to fire," again called Black Hoof's powerful voice.

Dale faced the cabins and waved his white wampum, crying:

"I am saving your lives. You men in the lower cabin, throw down your arms!"

"Like ——!" grunted Cousin.

"He's fairly among them!" I gasped.

Dale had come to a stop and was turning his head and glancing from one point to another on the ground as he talked. His voice had its old confident ring, and there was a slight smile on his lips as he rehearsed his friendship for the red people and reminded them how often he visited their villages and smoked their pipes.

When he ceased Black Hoof called out:

"We will lift a peace-pipe to our good friend, the Pack-Horse-Man. We will cover his friends with the smoke. Let him tell his friends not to be afraid and to throw down their guns."

Dale was sure of Granville's and the Englishman's behavior, and he addressed his warning to Cousin and me, calling on us in a stentorian voice to offer no resistance if we valued our lives. He ended by yelling, "Catahecassa, war-chief of the Shawnees, spares your lives."

Without giving us time to speak, he waved a hand and commanded:

"It's all right, Patricia! Come out!"

"Stay where you are!" I screamed, my voice muffled by the four stout walls. I jumped to tear the bar from the door, but Cousin hurled me aside, panting:

"Too late! God! To think such a woman should walk into their bloody trap!"

His words sent me to the loophole. Patricia Dale was walking composedly toward her father, her slim hands holding up her belts. She winced as she passed the lick-block and got a glimpse of the dead savage and the dead dog. Then her gaze remained steady on her father's calm face.

Black Hoof said something, but there was a pounding in my ears which prevented me from hearing it. I guessed it, though, when Dale called out, "All you who would be spared come out and leave your guns behind!"

He had barely spoken before the Englishman's voice excitedly called—

"You two scouts in there."

I gave him heed and he informed me: "Granville and his sister say they are going out. Do you go out?"

"We shall stay here. It's better for you to die where you are," I told him.

"Ay, I think it's better myself. Well, I'm old and hungry to be with the children again."

The Englishman was a brave man, and very sensible. He recognized Fate when it paused to stare him in the eye. My companion was panting for breath and was standing back so as to rest the muzzle of his rifle just inside the loophole. A glance revealed his deadly purpose. A tall warrior was now on his feet. I knew him to be Black Hoof. I had seen him at Fort Pitt during one of those rare lulls between wars.

Cousin was fairly out of his head with the lust to kill the chief, but the Shawnee took no chances. He was careful to keep the girl and her father between him and the cabins. I pushed Cousin's gun aside and fiercely upbraided him for placing the Dales' lives in jeopardy.

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"You fool!" he cried. "They're gone already. Are you, too, blind? If you love that gal out there and want to do her the greatest kindness a man can ever do to a border woman, shoot her!"

Granville began shouting:

"Me'n my sister are comin' out. We surrender. Tell 'em, Mr. Dale! God knows 'nough blood's been spilt."

I heard their cabin door open. Then it closed with a bang and we heard the heavy bar drop into place. For a moment I believed they had changed their minds; then they crossed our line of vision, the man walking ahead with empty hands held high, his sister walking behind and wildly waving a white cloth. It was the Englishman, skeptical, because of our advice, who dropped the bar.

Cousin began muttering under his breath. I soon discovered the reason. John Ward was approaching the group from the opposite side of the valley and trying to keep some of the whites between him and our cabin. The nearer he drew to the group, the easier this maneuver was. Ward had made a half-circuit of the valley and was advancing through the lines of hidden braves. Cousin would have tried a shot at the renegrade if not for fear of instant reprisal on the girl. It was horrible to hear him curse and moan as he nursed the set of triggers.

"Shut up!" I whispered. "Watch them close!"

I meant Granville and his sister; for as they entered the zone held by the enemy I observed a clump of low bushes dipping and swaying behind them. The woman saw something that frightened her, for she pressed close to her brother and shook the white cloth toward the ground. The grotesque fancy came into my head that she would do the same thing if she wanted to shoo some chickens out of a garden.

Granville and his sister walked up to Black Hoof, the woman still waving the cloth to make sure the chief beheld it and recognized its sacred character. Dale turned to give Cousin, the Englishman and me one last chance to save our lives; and the hideous work began.

John Ward seized Patricia from behind, holding her by her arms as a bulwark against our lead. Black Hoof with a lightning gesture raised his ax and struck Dale with the flat of it, sending him crashing to the ground. Almost at the same moment two devils leaped from the ground and with their axes struck Granville and his sister from behind. Black Hoof dropped behind his log the moment he struck Dale.

Ward remained standing, sheltered by the girl. But the two who had killed Granville and his sister forgot us in their lust to secure the scalps. I got one as he was kneeling on the man, and Cousin shot the other through the head before he could touch the woman. I shall never forget the terrible scream which burst from the lips of Patricia Dale. Then she went limp and her head sagged over Ward's arms, and he began to walk backward with her to the forest.

I RAN to the door and Cousin stuck out his foot and tripped me, and my head hit against the logs, and for a minute confused me beyond the possibility of action. When I would have renewed my efforts to pursue and die in attempting the rescue of the girl Ward was dragging her into the woods. Cousin's arm was around my neck, and as he pulled me back he passionately cried:

"Will it help her to git killed? The ground's alive with 'em! You can't more'n show your head afore they'd have your hair!"

I got to a loophole and looked out. Several guns banged and the bullets pattered into the logs. There was no sign of life in the valley beyond this scattering volley, however. Ward and the girl were gone. The dead Indian and dog were partly in view among the weeds beside the lick-block. The gown of the dead woman made a little patch of melancholy color against the green of the grass and ranker ground growth. Granville had been dragged behind some bushes to be scalped. I came near firing when I beheld two Shawnees making for the timber.

"Fellers we potted," murmured Cousin. "They've hitched cords to 'em an' are draggin' 'em to the woods so's no one'll git their hair."

From the Granville cabin a gun roared loudly; and an Indian, clawing at his bloody breast, shot up in the heart of a clump of bushes and pitched forward on his face.

"Lawdy! But the Englisher must 'a' used 'bout a pint o' buckshot!" exclaimed Cousin admiringly. "Pretty smart, too! He traced the cord back to where th' Injun was haulin' on it, an' trusted to his medicine to make the spreadin' buckshot fetch somethin'. Wish we had smoothbores an' a few pounds o' shot!"

Yells of rage and a furious volley against the two cabins evidenced how the enemy viewed the Englishman's success. Again the smoothbore roared and a handful of balls scoured another thicket. A warrior leaped from cover and started to run to the woods. Cousin shot him off his feet before he could make a rod.

Our admiration for the smoothbore and its wholesale tactics was beyond expression. The Indians, also, thoroughly appreciated its efficacy, and there was a general backward movement toward the woods. No savage showed himself except for a flash of bronze leg, or the flutter of a hand, too transient for even Cousin to take advantage of. The Englishman fired again, but flushed no game.

"We oughter be goin'," Cousin mused. "But the ridge behind us is still alive with 'em. Reckon we must wait till it gits dark."

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"Wait till night? Oh, I can't do that!" I cried.

"Your gal may be skeered to death, but she ain't been hurt any yet," he encouraged. "She's safe till they git her back to the towns. Black Hoof is too smart to hunt her now. If he gits into a tight corner afore he reaches the Ohio he'll need her to buy an open path with. She ain't in no danger s'long as he wants her on hand to swap if the settlers git him penned."

"No danger? And in the hands of that —— renegade!"

"Catahecassa is boss o' that band. Ward was only a spy. They may burn your gal when they git back on the Scioto where every one can enjoy it. But she won't be hurt any this side o' the Ohio. Our first job is to git clear o' this cabin an' valley. Then we must head those dogs off an' do the next job right."

His words cleared my mind of madness. Instead of the dark forest, forty rods away, marking the end of everything, I need not entirely despair until the girl reached the Scioto.

"They've hitched a rope to Dale an' are draggin' him to the woods. The —— fool ain't dead yet. Black Hoof fetched him a crack with the flat of his ax, but they'll roast him to a frizzle by'n by if our medicine don't fetch him out of it."

The man had been grossly mistaken and I pitied him. I wondered what he would think of the influence of trade on red heathens at war when he regained his senses! Surely he would learn the torments of hell when he beheld his daughter a prisoner.

The cabin was like an oven and the sting of powder-smoke made our eyes water. Outside the birds were fluttering about their daily tasks. High among the fleecy cloud-bundles were dark specks which we knew to be turkey-buzzards, already attracted by the dead. For some time the only sign of the enemy's presence was when three horses galloped down the valley, running from the savages in the edge of the woods. As the animals drew near the cabins and showed an inclination to visit the lick-block a volley from the Indians sent one down. The other two dashed madly toward the Bluestone.

Cousin studied the ridge back of the cabin and failed to discover any suggestion of the hidden foe.

"Which ain't no token they ain't there," he muttered.

"If they hadn't scared the horses we could have caught a couple!" I lamented.

"We'd been shot off their backs afore we'd gone two rods," assured my companion. "Let me show you."

With that he took a big gourd from the corner and painted a face on it with a piece of charcoal found in the fireplace. To a few small wooden pegs stuck in the top he made fast some long strings of tow, shredded out to resemble hair. Then he placed my hat on top of the gourd and the effect was most grotesque. Yet from a distance it easily would be mistaken for a human face.

It was a vast improvement on the old trick of hoisting a hat on a stick. His next maneuver was to enlarge one of the holes I had made in the roof. When he thrust his hands through the hole, as if about to draw himself up, he focused every savage eye on the back of the cabin roof. Through the opening he slowly pushed the gourd, topped by the hat and having long hair hanging down the sides.

The decoy was barely in place before he was on the floor while a volley of lead and a flight of arrows rained against the roof.

"I 'low that they're still there," he said.

"They'll wait till dark and then rush us."

"They'll use fire-arrers first," he corrected. "The Hoof has a poor stomick for losin' more warriors. He'll need lots o' sculps an' prisoners to make up for the men he's lost. He'll take no more chances. When it gits dark they'll start a blaze on the roof. They'll creep mighty close without our seein' 'em. The minute we show ourselves they'll be ready to jump us. The chief is reckonin' to take us alive. The towns on the Scioto will need more'n one stake-fire to make 'em forgit what this trip to Virginia has cost 'em."

The business of waiting was most dreary. There was no water in the cabin, and the sweat from our hands would spoil a priming unless care was taken. At the end of this misery was almost certain captivity, ended by torture. Cousin had the same thought for he spoke up and said—

"I'll live s'long's there's any show to even up the score, but I ain't goin' to be kept alive no three days over a slow fire just to make some fun for them —— beggars."

I WATCHED the bar of sunlight slowly move over the rough puncheon floor. The time passed infernally slowly for men waiting to test a hopeless hazard. By all logic the minutes should have been very precious and should have fairly flashed into eternity. The best we could reasonably wish for was death in combat, or self-inflicted. Yet we cursed the heat, the buzzing flies, the choking fumes of powder, the lack of water, and wished the time away.

I wanted to open the door a bit for a breath of outside air. Cousin objected, saying:

"We could do it, an' there ain't no Injuns near 'nough to play us any tricks. But they'd see the door was open, even if only a crack, and they'd know we was gittin' desperate, or sufferin' a heap, an' that would tickle 'em. I'm ag'in' givin' 'em even that bit of enj'yment. If we can make a break when it gits dark afore the fire-arrers begin lightin' things up we'll

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try for the Bluestone. If we could git clear o' this —— bottle we'd stand a chance o' makin' our hosses."

I glanced down at the floor, and my heart tightened a bit. The bar of sunlight had vanished.

"We've just 'bout come to it," gravely remarked Cousin. "I ain't no talkin' cuss, but I'll say right here that I sorter like you, Morris. If things could 'a' been different, an' I could be more like other folks, I 'low we'd been good friends."

"We're the best of friends, Shelby. As long as I can think I shall remember how you came with me into this trap to help rescue the girl."

"Shucks! Don't be a —— fool!" he growled. "That ain't nothin'. Once I busted up a Mingo camp to git my dawg. They'd caught the critter an' was cal'latin' to sculp him alive. Got him free, too, an' the —— pup was that stirred up by his feelin's that he couldn't tell who was his friends, an' he chawed my thumb somethin' cruel."

He stepped to the loophole, and after peering out mumbled—

"Changin' mighty smart."

I glanced out and the ridges were losing their outlines and the valley was becoming blurred. Cousin mused.

"It'll be comin' right smart now. Don't overlook anything."

We made a last examination of flints and primings, and Cousin softly arranged the heavy door bar so it might be displaced with a single movement. He startled me by abruptly standing erect and cocking his head to one side and remaining motionless.

"The old Englishman!" he exclaimed. "He ain't fired a shot, or tried to talk with us for a long time."

I went to the front end of the cabin and put my eye to the peephole. The small window showed black. I called to him several times and received no answer. There was only one conclusion. A chance ball through a loophole or a window had killed the old fellow. Cousin agreed to this. A signal at the mouth of the valley brought us to our toes. It was about to begin. The signal was answered from the ridge behind us.

"They've put the stopper in the bottle," Cousin whispered. "But here's an idea. The upper cabin, where the Dales was, is empty. If we could sneak in there without bein' seen we'd have the slimmest sort of a chance to duck back to the ridge while they was shootin' their fire-arrers at this cabin. There would be a few minutes, when the first flames begin showin', when every eye would be on this place. If we could only reach the flank o' the ridge we'd be fools if we couldn't dodge 'em."

This appealed to me as being excellent strategy. Knowing the Dales' cabin was empty, the Indians would not think of paying it much attention at first. To leave our shelter and make the short distance would require darkness. Our greatest danger would be from the Indians on the ridge back of us. By this time they were lined up at the foot of the slope and were all ready to break from cover.

In our favor was the Granville cabin, which would shelter us from the ridge for a bit of the perilous way. Already it was possible, I decided, to crawl the distance without being detected by the enemy across the valley. Cousin refused to run the risk, and argued.

"Every minute gained now gives us that much more of a chance. The Injuns out front ain't all across the valley any more. They begun creepin' into the clearin' the minute it begun growin' dark. Reckon it's time they larned who's cooped up in here, so's they won't git too bold."

He removed the bar of the door and through the crevice sounded his terrible war-cry, the scream of a panther. It stabbed the dusk with earsplitting intensity.

"There! They'll stop an' count a dozen afore gittin' too close," he muttered as he softly replaced the bar. "They'll lay mighty low an' won't bother to do much but watch the door. I 'low it'll be hard work to crawl out without they guessin' somethin's wrong."

"Then let's rip up the floor and dig a hole under the logs," I suggested.

"We'll do that," he quietly agreed.

As cautiously as possible we removed several of the puncheon slabs next to the wall. The base logs were huge fellows and held the floor several feet from the ground. To excavate a hole under either of the four would have required more time than we believed we had to spare. Our plan threatened to be hopeless until Cousin explored the length of the log with his fingers and gave a little cry of delight.

He found a hole already dug near the front end of the cabin. It had been the work of the dog. Working with our hunting-knives we loosened the dirt and pawed it behind us and made it larger. At last Cousin pressed me back and ducked his head and shoulders into the hole. Then he drew back and whispered:

"I can git my head an' shoulders through. 'Low I could squirm out o' —— if I could git my shoulders through. I'll go ahead an' you pass out the rifles. Ready?"

I pressed his hand. There followed a few moments of waiting, then a handful of dirt fell into the hole and informed me my companion had squeezed clear of the log and that the ultimate test was to be faced. I passed the rifles, butts first, and felt them gently removed from my grasp. Working noiselessly as possible I soon squirmed out into the refreshing evening air and lay motionless. Cousin was ahead and already worming his way

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toward the third cabin. My outstretched hand touched the butt of my rifle, and I began creeping after my friend.

I nearly suffocated in crawling by the opening between our cabin and the Granville cabin, for I scarcely ventured to breathe. It seemed as if any one within pistol-shot of me must hear the pounding of my heart. The silence continued, and at last I was hugging the ground at the end of the cabin and for the time sheltered from spying eyes at the foot of the ridge.

A quavering cry rang out at the mouth of the valley. This time it was answered from the clearing on our right as well as from the ridge. The Indians had crept closer, just as Cousin had predicted.

Half a minute passed, then the signal sounded directly ahead of us, or from beyond the Dales' cabin. The circle was completed. From the ridge soared a burning arrow. It fell short, landing behind the cabin we had vacated; and as it gave off no light I surmised it went out on striking the ground.

Cousin drew away from the end of the Granville cabin and was risking the second and last gap. I hurried a bit, fearing more arrows. As I came abreast of the door I wondered what had become of the Englishman. Either the night was playing a trick, or else the door was partly open. I reached out my hand to learn the truth, and touched a cold hand hanging limply over the threshold.

My nerves jumped, but I mastered them by reasoning that the Englishman had been shot by a chance ball and had attempted to leave the cabin, thinking to gain our shelter and to die there. Death had overtaken him as he was opening the door. That it was the Englishman's hand I had touched was evidenced by the shirt sleeve, puckered in at the wrist.

I released the poor hand and was resuming my way when a slight sound caused me to hold my breath. Then a heavy weight landed on my back, knocking the breath from my lungs with an explosive grunt. Next, the night was ripped from horizon to horizon with a jagged streak of red.

CHAPTER IX

DALE ESCAPES

WHEN I recovered my senses I was being dragged over the ground by means of a cord around my chest and under my arms. My wrists were lashed together and my ankles were likewise secured. The first thing my eyes beheld were the red loopholes and window of the lower cabin, and the flames crawling through the two holes I had made in the roof.

My capture had revealed our desertion of the cabin, and the Indians had lost no time in entering and firing it. Smoke and flames were pouring from the end window of the Granville cabin also. As the red tongues licked across the top of the doorway they threw into relief the arm and hand of the old Englishman still hanging over the threshold.

My head felt as though it was cracked wide open and it throbbed most sickeningly. I managed to lift it a bit to escape further bruises as my captor roughly hauled me to the forest. The third cabin, the one occupied by the Dales, burst into flames as I was being yanked into the first fringe of bushes. The valley was now brightly lighted, and my last view of it included the lick-block. One phase of a successful Indian raid was missing; there were no warriors madly dancing about the burning homes. Far up the ridge rang out the infuriated cry of a panther, and I knew it was fear of young Cousin's deadly rifle that was keeping the savages under cover.

"Let me stand up and walk," I said in Shawnee.

"Alive are you?" growled a white man's voice in English.

"You'll be John Ward," I said as some one lifted me to my feet.

"I am Red Arrow, a Shawnee. And don't you forget it."

"Where are the Dales?" I asked.

"Keep your mouth shut!" he ordered.

They untied my hands only to fasten them behind me. They shifted the waist-cord to my neck, and then released my feet. Some one walked ahead, pulling on the cord, and I followed as best I could to escape being strangled. On each side of me walked a warrior, invisible except as when we crossed a glade where the starlight filtered down. Ward walked behind me, and warned—

"Any tricks and you'll get my ax."

"You were in the cabin with the dead Englishman?"

He chuckled softly and boasted:

"I killed him. When you two were fighting fire I got my chance to steal down to the Dale cabin. Then it was easy to make the Granville cabin. The old fool thought I was one of you when he heard my voice, and drew the bar. I was inside and had his life before he knew he had made a mistake. I waited. Then you crawled along. —— that young devil who yells like a panther! He was the one I wanted. I'd give a thousand of such as you to get his hair! But he got by the door without my hearing him. A little more, and you'd have passed, too."

There was much crashing and running through the bushes behind us, and occasionally I could make out dark shapes hurrying by. These were the warriors who had fired the cabins, and now they were in haste to leave the spot. Owing to their fear of Cousin they dared not leave the valley except as they did so under

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cover. We made good time through the woods, however, although more than once my gasping cry warned Ward, or one of the savages at my side, that I was being choked to death.

As a premature demise was not on their program the cord was quickly loosened each time, and the man ahead warned to be more careful. These partial strangulations resulted from the fellow's anxiety to escape from the neighborhood of the double-barrel rifle. On reaching the Bluestone we halted while the savages collected their horses. From the few words exchanged I estimated that half the band was mounted. Without building a fire or eating we started up the Bluestone. Neither Black Hoof nor the Dales were with our party when we halted at daybreak. We paused only long enough to bolt some half-cooked deer-meat. I asked for the trader and his daughter, and Ward laughed and shook before my face the scalps he had taken in the Granville cabin. Two of them were pitiably small.

"You scalp other men's kills," I observed.

"You'll not say that when I scalp you."

"What does Dale now think of his Indian friends?"

This seemed to amuse him tremendously, and he laughed like a white man.

"He doesn't seem to know what has happened," he finally replied with much relish. "He stares at us, then at the girl, as if trying to understand."

"What about the girl?"

"That's enough. Keep still," he warned, and made a threatening gesture with his ax.

My hands, which had been released long enough for me to eat, were trussed up again. My rough usage and the travel had worn on me, but I had no desire to rest so long as Patricia Dale was to be found. My captors also had a definite plan—one that demanded haste. By daylight I perceived by the signs that the greater number of the band had gone ahead, probably under the lead of Black Hoof.

Unless the Dales had been butchered in the woods they must be with the chief; and I could not believe they were dead. They would be too valuable as hostages should the settlers gather in force to block the Shawnees' return to the Ohio. Those of the Indians who had horses, with the exception of two, rode off. One of the mounted men to remain was Ward, who came behind me. The other was the Indian holding the cord.

It was plain that every savage in the band was eager to advance with all possible haste, nor was it fear of Cousin that was now driving them. Finally my aching head understood it all; the Howard's Creek settlement was to be attacked and the savages afoot were afraid they would arrive too late to participate.

On our left rose the wall of Great Flat Top Mountain, a short chain, in reality a continuation of Tug Ridge. On the right rose ridge after ridge of the Alleghanies, punctuated by Peter's Mountain, where New River burst through the wall in its quest for the Ohio. A wild land, and yet birds and bees and deer were here, and the soil was ripe for happy homes.

I managed to keep up until after midday, when my legs suddenly refused to carry me farther. I told Ward to tomahawk me if he wished, but that I must rest before moving another step. There was no question as to his inclination, for his brown hand fondled his ax most longingly. He dismounted and boosted me on to his horse. The rest of the day was covered with me riding first Ward's and then the savage's animal.

WE CAMPED at dusk that night, and I was too exhausted to swallow more than a few mouthfuls of food before falling asleep. Before sunrise we were up and hurrying through the gray mists and reversing the route Cousin and I had followed on traveling to the valley. I recognized several of the camps where the Dales and Ward had halted when the brute was leading them into the death-trap.

"You nearly got me by dropping the girl's moccasin in the mountains," I informed him.

The abruptness of the accusation took him off his guard. With a wide grin he said:

"Stole it from her just before we entered the settlement. Saw Hughes striking into the hills and planned to catch him. But he got too far ahead for me to ride around him. Dogged him until he met you, then rode back and laid my trap. Hughes was the man I was after. His hair would count for a dozen scalps like yours."

"But you didn't care to try a shot unless it could be from behind and sure to kill," I taunted.

"You'll pay a high price for that," he quietly assured me. "The chief says you are to be brought in alive. We will soon see how brave you are with the girl looking on. Men should be very brave when their squaws are watching."

I was afoot and walking at his side. I lowered my head and tried to butt him from the saddle. He kicked me in the chest and the warrior yanked on the cord and threw me down on my face and all but strangled me. After that Ward and I had no more words. He rode either ahead, or some distance behind, leaving one of the Indians to walk at my heels. I have no doubt he did this to avoid any temptation to brain me. I lost track of time, for we traveled far into the night when the footing was good. We snatched a few hours' sleep when absolutely necessary and fed indifferently. When I could walk no farther I was placed on one of the two horses. I hoped that Cousin in escaping from Abb's Valley had taken our horses with him; and I prayed he would reach Howard's Creek ahead of Black Hoof.

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At last we came to the outskirts of an Indian camp, which I estimated to be within less than half a mile of the creek settlement. A dozen warriors swarmed forward to greet us, welcoming me with exaggerated courtesy. While they were thus mocking me Black Hoof appeared, moving with great dignity, and dispersing my tormentors with a gesture.

I was led into the camp and my cord made fast to a tree. There was no air of triumph about the place. A warrior reclining on a pile of boughs and nursing a shattered shoulder suggested a futile attack on the cabins. I glanced about for a display of fresh scalps and rejoiced at beholding none.

The Indians stared at me malevolently, but offered me no abuse. Ward proudly flourished the hair he had retrieved from the Granville cabin, and the trophies were soon fastened to a tall pole and paraded around the camp, after which demonstration the pole was stuck upright in the ground.

It required a second examination of the place to locate Dale. Like myself he was tied to a tree with sufficient length of cord to permit him to lie down. His face was heavy with unspeakable horror. When he met my gaze he did not seem to recognize me at first. Then he muttered—

"You, too!"

My heart ached when I failed to discover any trace of Patricia. Before I could question the trader Ward yanked me to my feet and turned me about, and I found myself looking into the eyes of Black Hoof.

"The young man made a very brave fight," he said.

"It is sad to know a skunk and not a Shawnee warrior captured me," I replied. Ward glared murder at me. Black Hoof gave him a warning glance, and informed me:

"Red Arrow is a Shawnee warrior. Very brave. Very cunning. He will help us take the cabins on the creek."

"You have tried once?" I asked, glancing at the man with the broken shoulder.

The chief's brows contracted.

"Some of my young men were very foolish," he replied. "When Catahecassa tries, the first time will be the last."

From the direction of the settlement came the scream of a panther, and at the sound the camp seemed to stir uneasily. With a fiery glance at the warriors Black Hoof gave an order, and a score of men glided into the forest. To me he quietly said:

"There was a panther's whelp in the little valley we did not get. The Shawnees would dance his scalp ahead of all the hair growing in any of these valleys. He rode to the settlement ahead of me. But we shall get them now. We shall get him. Then we will see if his war-cry is strong when he feels fire."

"Where is the white woman? Did you kill her?" I asked, and I had to fight myself to keep my voice from shaking.

Without deigning to answer he turned and walked over to Dale. At almost the same moment Patricia and Shelby Cousin's sister entered the camp. Patricia walked ahead, the Cousin girl a few feet behind her. I forgot the cord and eagerly started to join her.

Ward snarled like an animal and jerked on the cord and pulled me violently back. Patricia glanced in our direction, and I saw her hand fly to her heart as she stared at me with lips parted. Black Hoof noticed this bit of drama, and wheeling about, he harshly commanded:

"Let Red Arrow remember I am chief. If the white man would talk to the white woman do not stop him. See that his hands are well tied and put hobbles on his legs."

"If I had my way with you!" hissed Ward.

An Indian slipped the cord from the tree and with it trailing behind me I hurried to the girl. She dropped on a log, her face a white mask of terror. Cousin's sister remained a few paces behind her. Her face was expressionless, but she did not remove her gaze from Patricia. Perhaps Patsy was the first white woman she had seen whose freshness suggested her own youth. Recognizing my desire to talk with the prisoner she withdrew, keeping in sight but out of hearing.

"At least they have not tied you," I said.

"I go and come as I will," was the listless answer.

"With the woman to watch you?"

"Not if I want to be alone."

"You mean you are free to go and come unwatched?" I demanded.

She nodded her head.

"Then why haven't you tried to make the settlement? It is near. Listen. Shelby Cousin is there. The Indians can't afford the time it will take to capture the place. Walk along into the woods. Go due east. By God's grace I believe you can make it!"

"Basdel, you forget," she sorrowfully reproached. "You forget my father is here. That is why they give me my freedom."

"He would rejoice and thank God if you would do as I say."

"But the Indian woman with the blue eyes has told me in English that if I run away they will hurt him terribly."

Poor child! As if her presence could save Ericus Dale from dying the death once Black Hoof found time to indulge in his favorite pastime. I vehemently begged her to flee, promising all sorts of absurd things if she would but do so, even to assuring her I would effect her father's release.

She slowly shook her head, tempted not the least by my pleas.

"Even the Indians know me better than

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that. And to think we trusted them! Oh, Basdel, it doesn't seem possible! You were right. Father was wrong. God help him! And now they have taken you!"

"All will be well yet," I faltered.

"Yes, all will be well," she gently said. "All will be well, when we are dead and at peace."

"Patsy! Patsy!" I begged. "Don't give up hope. Don't lose your courage! Why, there's a dozen chances for us to fool these devils."

She patted my tied hands, and murmured:

"You're a good boy, Basdel. You were patient when I abused you. You told me the truth. I am out of place out here. If I were a pioneer woman I could help you plan to escape, but I am only a silly fool from over the mountains. I am absolutely helpless. But you've been good to me, Basdel. You followed me into that horrible valley. You were caught because you tried to help us. Oh, the shame of it! The hideous cruelty of it! That you were caught—Basdel, I pray my last thought will be about your goodness to me. Just that."

She was at the limit of her endurance and I backed away and Cousin's sister glided forward. I flogged my mind for a scheme of escape which would include her; her father, if possible. But it was as she had said; she was no pioneer woman, resourceful and daring. The Shawnees saw her helplessness, else they never would have allowed her the freedom of the camp and surrounding woods.

They knew she would never leave her father, and that she lacked the border woman's daring initiative so necessary in any attempt to free him. As I was casting about for some plan to save her Black Hoof glided to my side and took me by the arm and led me toward the tree where Dale was lying.

THIS closer inspection of the trader revealed how fearfully he had suffered in his mind. The flesh of his strong face hung in folds as if his skin had suddenly become many sizes too large for him. His eyes had retreated deeper into the sockets, and his thick lips, once so firm and domineering, were loose and flabby. Black Hoof stirred him contemptuously with his foot. Dale dragged himself to a sitting-posture and began shivering as if suffering from the ague.

"Oh, my God, Morris!" he groaned.

"The Pack-Horse-Man can save his life," sententiously began Black Hoof.

"My daughter?" gasped Dale, rising on his knees.

"He shall save his daughter's life," added the chief.

Dale moistened his lips and tried to recover some of his old spirit.

"Never mind, Morris. Give me a little time. I'll get us all out of this fix. They're angry now. When they've had time to think they'll be reasonable. If they kill me, they'll kill their trade with the whites." It was the first time I ever heard him pronounce the word without stressing it.

Black Hoof glowered at the miserable man ferociously and said:

"You will go to the edge of the clearing with my warriors. You will speak to the settlers and tell them they shall save their lives if they put down their guns. After they put down their guns you and your daughter shall go free."

The picture of Abb's Valley and the result of his trusting in the Shawnees' promises must have flashed across the unhappy man's mind. He sank, feebly moaning:

"No, no! Not that! The blood of the Granvilles—the little children—is on me. Kill me, but I'll lead no more into your trap."

These were brave words even if brokenly voiced. But Black Hoof heard with grim amusement in his small black eyes.

"You weak-hearted dog!" he hissed. "So you tell Catahecassa what he will and what he will not, do. Ho! You fat white man who always planned to cheat the Indians in a trade. You fill your ears against Catahecassa's words? Ho! Then you are a brave man. The Shawnees have been blind not to see your brave heart. Now, white trader, hear my talk. You will do as Catahecassa says, or you will be tied to a tree and your daughter shall be put to the torture before your eyes."

With a terrible cry Dale fell over on his side and remained unconscious. There was a second shriek, and the girl was pushing Black Hoof aside as she hastened to kneel by her father. The chief darted a glance of admiration at her for her display of courage. The girl was blind to our presence as she fondled and petted the stricken man until he opened his eyes. Black Hoof was pleased to have her there as a means of breaking down the trader's will. Leaning over her shoulder to stare down into the terrified eyes of his victim the chief warned:

"Unless the settlers give themselves up it shall be as I have said. It must be before the sun goes down. Tell her all I have said."

With that he dragged me back to my tree. For a few minutes the chief's horrible threat dulled my mind to the point of stupidity. He waited for me to collect my thoughts. At last I managed to ask:

"What you said back there was a trick of course? You would never torture the daughter of the Pack-Horse-Man?"

"Unless he does as told she must die," he calmly assured me. "She will die soon anyway. She is not strong enough to live our life, like the blue-eyed squaw over there." And he glanced toward Cousin's sister. "Her children would be neither red nor white. They would have squaw-hearts. If the trader does not speak words that will bring the settlers from

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their cabins with empty hands she shall be tortured until he does speak."

I do not remember falling, yet I found myself on the ground, and Black Hoof had departed. In his place stood Ward, staring at me curiously.

"You went down as if hit with an ax," he grunted.

"My legs are weak from hard travel and poor food," I said.

Patricia Dale passed quite close to us, a gourd of water in her hands. She was carrying it to her father. Ward exclaimed in English—

"What a woman!"

His brawny figure seemed to dilate and he made a queer hissing noise as he looked after her. Turning to me he hoarsely said:

"I was born white. It's her blood that calls me. When I saw her in Salem I said I would have her for my squaw if I could get her and her fool of a father into the mountains."

My mental paralysis lifted.

"Is she promised to you?" I asked.

"I am to have any two prisoners to do with as I like," he answered. "Catahecassa said that when I started to enter the villages beyond the mountains to get news. There was little chance of bringing any whites back, but if I did I was to have two of them."

"Then you had better remind your chief of his promise," I warned. "He says he will torture the girl before her father's eyes if the father does not help in betraying the settlers."

"Ugh! I have his promise. He dare not break it."

The girl would kill herself before submitting to Ward's savage caresses. She would go mad if forced to witness the torture of her father. I had seized upon Ward's passion as a means of gaining a bit more time. If he could successfully claim the girl then she must be rescued from him. But viewed from any angle I could find nothing but horrors.

Release by death would be very kind. If any harm were suffered by the girl I should lose my reason; my life, if God were merciful. No longer did our time of grace extend to the Scioto villages. At any moment our little destinies might come to a fearful ending. In my soul I railed at the curse of it. Such a little way to go, and so much pain and sorrow.

Ward left me and strode up to the chief. They talked rapidly, and I could read from Ward's mien that he was very angry. When he returned to me he was in a rare rage.

"Catahecassa dodges by saying you and the trader are the two prisoners I must take. He says he will burn the girl unless the trader makes the talk as told. If I can find a way of capturing the settlers the girl will be given to me in place of either you or her father."

"I don't want to be your prisoner," I said.

"I do not believe you do," he agreed. "But I would take you if I did not need the trader. If the girl refuses to become my squaw then I will build a little fire on Dale's back. That will make her accept my belts."

He left me with that thought in my mind. On the one hand the girl was to be utilized in forcing Dale to betray the settlement. On the other, the trader was to be used to make the girl submit to the renegade. I could not imagine a more horrible situation. I was still wallowing deep in my hell when the camp became very active. Dale was lifted to his feet and his cords were removed.

The time had come for Black Hoof to try him as a decoy. There remained a good hour of light. Patricia, not understanding, yet fearing the worst, hovered about her father, her eyes wildly staring and her whole appearance denoting a weakening of her reason. As they started to lead her father into the woods she attempted to follow him, and Black Hoof pushed her back. Cousin's sister spoke up, saying—

"I will keep her."

THE warriors disappeared in the direction of the settlement. The two women left the camp on the opposite side. Ward went along with the Indians, and I knew this was my golden opportunity to escape. Before I could make a beginning at freeing my hands a noose fell over my head and clutched at my throat. The guards were taking no chances.

Great mental anguish is accompanied by no clarity of thought and graves no connected memories on the mind. I know I suffered, but there are only fragments of recollections covering that black period of waiting.

I have a clear picture of the warrior holding the end of the cord calling for some one to bring a gourd of water. I do not remember drinking, but as later I found the front of my shirt soaked I assume the water was for me. Coherent memory resumes with the noise the warriors made in returning to the camp. I shall never forget their appearance as they emerged from the undergrowth. Black Hoof walked ahead. Close behind him came two warriors dragging Dale.

I was amazed to behold Patricia in the procession. She was leaning on lost sister's arm, and there was a lump on her forehead as though she had been struck most brutally. Then came the warriors and Ward. Dale was roughly thrown to the ground. Several men began trimming the branches from a stout sapling. Others became busy searching the fallen timber for dry wood.

Ward walked over to me and kicked me in the side. I must have groaned aloud, for he commanded—

"Shut up! I'm ripe for a killing."

Matters had gone against his liking. He

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played with his ax nervously, his baleful gaze darting about the camp. I waited and at last his race heritage compelled him to talk, and he commenced:

"The old man was scared into doing what the chief told him to do. He would not at first, and the men were sent to bring the girl along. When he faced her he made a noise like a sheep bleating. Then he ran to the clearing and began his talk. The girl heard his words. She broke away and ran into sight of the cabins and screamed for them not to listen, that it was a trap. Black Hoof struck her with the flat of his ax. Now he swears he'll roast the fool."

"She is your prisoner!" I cried.

"He says she must burn."

"There must be some way, something you can do!" I wildly insisted, my only thought being to spare her the immediate danger.

"I want her for my squaw bad enough to get her if I can," he growled. "But if I'm to think of any plan I must be quick. They've got the stake nearly ready."

He walked to where the warriors were collecting small fuel from between the fallen trees. One of them hauled a hollow maple log out of the débris and threw it one side as being too heavy for a quick fire. Ward halted and rested a foot on it and bowed his head. Next he began tapping it with his tomahawk. His actions attracted the attention of the men, and Black Hoof asked:

"What does Red Arrow think is in the log? A snake?"

Ward startled the savages, and also me, by curtly replying:

"He sees a white man's cannon in the log. The fort holds all the settlers on the creek. Its walls are stout. If they can be broken down the Shawnees will take many scalps and prisoners. It will be an easy victory. Black Hoof's name will be repeated far beyond Kaskaskia and the Great Lakes in the North. He will be given many new war-names."

Black Hoof's eyes glittered as he pictured the glory and prestige the hollow log might confer upon him. He examined the log carefully and perceived only that it was hollow.

"Have you medicine to make it into a cannon?" he asked.

"I have big medicine. Before it will work for me I must be given the white squaw. There must be no taking back of the gift. If the medicine-cannon does not give the settlers into our hands still the white squaw must be mine to do with as I will."

Black Hoof took some minutes to ponder over this proposition. He could only see a hollow log. Ward's intellect permitted him to see greater possibilities. While he waited for the chief to make a decision he examined the maple more thoroughly, and smiled quietly.

Black Hoof at last said:

"Catahecassa gives the white woman to the Red Arrow. Tell your medicine to make the big gun shoot."

Ward was exultant. To the wondering savages he explained:

"It must be bound tight with much rawhide. Small stones must be packed tight in the butt-end. I will make a hole for the priming. Then we will draw it to the clearing and load it with powder and rocks."

This simple expedient, superior to the best plans of the Indians, was greeted with yells of triumph. The chief said—

"Red Arrow is a medicine-man."

The wooden tube was reinforced under Ward's directions. This done, the savages danced and whooped about the grotesque cannon for some minutes. Ward stood with folded arms, his gaze gloating as it rested on the girl, and haughty with pride as he observed Black Hoof's respectful bearing. Coming back to me he said:

"You wanted that woman. You will die among the Shawnees. You showed you wanted her when you followed her into that valley. Her father spoke of you and by his words I knew you wanted her. Now I have her."

The girl came forward, attracted by Ward's speech to me, although she could understand none of it. She drew aside in passing the renegade and dropped on her knees at my side.

"What do they plan? What will they do with me?" her dry lips demanded.

Ward, enraged by her show of aversion, seized her by the shoulder, ripping the cloth, and dragged her to her feet, and informed her:

"Catahecassa ordered his men to burn you. I made him give you to me. You are my woman. You are lucky I am not a red man."

"No! No! I'll burn, you monster! I'll burn a hundred times," she panted. And she struck her hand into his face, whereat the savages shouted in merriment.

I believed he would kill her then and there, for he groaned aloud from rage and raised his ax over his head.

"Strike me!" she begged, facing the uplifted ax unflinchingly; and although not of the border she displayed the fine courage of the Widow McCabe and other frontier women.

With a whimpering, bestial note Ward managed to say:

"No! You shall live, and many times beg me to kill you. But you shall still live till I trade you to some red hunter."

"I will kill myself some way before you can harm me!" she defied.

Ward slowly lowered his ax and began chuckling. He told her, pointing to me:

"This man. He loved you. He was a fool. I say *was* because his life is behind him. It is something that is finished, a trace followed to the end. He is a dead man as he lies there.

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But he loved you. I believe you loved him. He is my prisoner. Now you can guess why I know you will not harm yourself."

I KNEW. She was suffering too much to reason clearly. But he was eager to help her to understand. He amplified by explaining:

"It will be for you to say if he is to be tortured. He is young and strong. We could keep him alive many days after the fire began to burn him. It will be a fine game to see whom you love the best, yourself or him. You will be free to go about the camp. But this man will be watched all the time. After we take the fort tonight you will come to me and ask to be my woman.

"I had planned to take your father for my second prisoner. My medicine tells me to take this man as he will live longer. Remember; you will ask to be my squaw. That sapling was trimmed for you; it will do for this man. You will come to me, or he goes to the stake. Now, go!"

And he reached out his hand and sent her spinning and reeling toward her father.

"You dog! Set me free, empty-handed, and you take a knife and ax, and I will show the Shawnees what a poor dog you are," I told him in Shawnee.

But he was not to be tempted into any violence just now. He mocked:

"You are something to be watched and guarded. When my new wife is ugly to me I will order you to the fire. Then she will be kind and you will be kept alive. Some time you will go to the fire. When I get tired of her and wish a new wife."

Patricia crawled to her father and laid her head on his breast. No one gave her any heed except as the Cousin girl walked by her several times, watching her with inscrutable eyes. The Shawnees were impatient to try their new cannon.

At Ward's suggestion Black Hoof sent some of his warriors to make a feint on the east side of the fort, so that the cannon could be hurried forward and mounted across a log while the garrison's attention was distracted. It was now dusk in the woods although the birds circling high above the glade caught the sunlight on their wings. The clearing would now be in the first twilight shadows, and Black Hoof gave his final orders.

Acting on Ward's command two warriors fell upon me and fastened cords to my wrists and ankles and staked me out in spread-eagle style, and then sat beside me, one on each side. Half a dozen of the older men remained in the camp. Dale was mumbling something to the girl and she rose as if at his bidding.

The Cousin girl glided forward and in English asked what she wanted. It was Dale who told her, asking for water in Shawnee. She motioned for Patricia to remain where she was and in a few minutes brought water in a gourd and some venison. Patricia drank but would eat nothing.

The Cousin woman tried to feed Dale, and succeeded but poorly. I asked for food and water, and one of them brought a gourd and some meat. They lifted my head so I might drink and fed me strips of smoked meat, but they would not release my hands.

After a time we heard much shouting and the firing of many guns. This would be the mock attack, I judged. It increased in volume, this firing, until I feared that what had been started as a feint was being pushed forward to a victory.

Suddenly the firing dropped away and only the yelling continued. This would mean the savages had succeeded in rushing their wooden cannon close enough to do damage.

Every Indian left in the camp, including my two guards, were now standing listening eagerly for the voice of the cannon. It came, a loud explosion that dwarfed all rifle-fire any of us had ever heard. With screams of joy the guard began dancing about me and the older men danced around the Dales. They went through all the grotesque attitudes and steps which they use in their pantomimes of great victories.

This savage play was quickly stilled, however, as groans of pain and shouts of furious anger came to us. Now the cheering was that of white voices only. There was the noise of many feet hurrying back to the camp. Black Hoof came through the bushes first, and only the dusk saved my head from being split, as with a howl he threw his ax at me. Then came Ward, staggering like a drunken man and clawing at his left shoulder.

The full force of the catastrophe was revealed when four broken forms of dead warriors were hurried into the little opening, followed by a dozen braves bearing wounds which would appal a town-dweller. Ward's medicine had lied to them. The cannon had burst and had scattered its charge of stones among the Shawnees. One of the corpses had been beheaded by a piece of rock.

Several warriors rushed toward the Dales; others ran to me.

"Stop!" roared Black Hoof. "Do not touch the prisoners!"

Some one lighted a fire. Other fires sprang up until the glade was well illumined. Black Hoof sent some of the younger men to scout the creek so the camp might not be surprized by a sally. To the warriors remaining the chief announced:

"We must march for the Ohio. Bad medicine has dogged us for many sleeps. I will make a feast to my medicine and will tell you what it says shall be done with the prisoners."

"That man and that woman are my prisoners!" hoarsely cried Ward.

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"They were your prisoners while we believed your medicine was strong. Now that we know your medicine is weak and foolish they belong to all the Shawnees. Red Arrow's medicine is bad at heart. It told him to make a big gun. Four of my warriors are dead. Many are hurt. It will take blood to cover the bodies of the dead. Red Arrow has no prisoners until he goes and catches them."

Ward pulled his ax and limped toward me. No warrior made an effort to stop him. But Black Hoof reminded:

"When the Red Arrow is no longer a Shawnee he will be tied and left at the edge of the settlement. The prisoners are not to be harmed until my medicine directs."

Ward halted. He was close enough for me to see that while he had escaped a wound from the flying stones his shoulder was blown full of powder. The sweat streamed down his face and intimated something of the agony he was suffering.

"Black Hoof is a great warrior and a mighty chief!" he said huskily. "But Red Arrow's medicine is weak because it has not been fed. Only blood will make it strong. Let this man die before we break our camp." And he stirred me with his foot.

"The prisoners belong to the Shawnees. My medicine may whisper to kill one of them, but the warriors in sound of my voice must decide. Those who would see one of the three die show the ax."

Almost as soon as he had spoken the air was filled with spinning axes, ascending to the boughs and then falling to be deftly caught, each ax by its owner.

"It is good," said the chief. "My medicine shall pick the prisoners to die."

The explosion of the wooden cannon and the chief's ruling that we were no longer Ward's prisoners appealed to me as a reprieve. At least the girl was snatched from Ward's clutches. But the unanimous vote that one of us must die threw me back on the rack.

It was inconceivable that Patricia Dale should thus die. And yet I had had an earnest of the devil's ferocity. East of the mountains I could not have imagined a hand ever being raised against her. And I had seen her buffeted and struck down this day. Therefore, I did comprehend the inconceivable.

I called out to the chief:

"Catahecassa, listen to a white medicine, for the red medicine is far away or else is asleep. If the white woman is harmed you will shed tears of blood before you reach your Scioto towns. The settlers are swarming in to head you off. You have no time to spend in torturing any prisoner.

"But had you many sleeps of time it would be bad for you to harm the white girl. If you harm her you will have nothing to trade for an open path to the river. If you are wise in war, as your enemies say you are, you will guard her carefully at least until you make your villages above the Ohio."

The chief's eyes shifted uneasily, but his voice was ominous as he tersely advised:

"The white man had better ask his strong medicine to keep him from the fire. One of the prisoners shall roast this night. I have said it."

HE HAD not liked my words as they set his superstitions to working, but it would never do for him to bow before the threats of a white medicine. So he remained inexorable in his determination to cover his dead with a white victim.

His raid into Virginia had been disastrous even though he could count the four Grisdols, the seven men, women and children in Abb's Valley in his death score. And he had taken three prisoners. Doubtless there were other victims at the fire I had seen when on the Cheat. But the price he had paid for these various kills and us three prisoners was too heavy.

Every Indian slain had been a prime fighting man, one it would take years of training to replace. After counting his losses in the mountains about the Grisdol clearing, the warriors killed in Abb's Valley, and now his losses here at Howard's Creek, the score was distinctly against him. No matter how mighty and famous a chief may be, he will surely and quickly lose his following if disaster dogs his war-paths.

So I could understand Black Hoof's mental attitude. He attributed his misfortunes to his weakening medicine. Let the cost be ever so dear he must strengthen that medicine; and he firmly believed a human sacrifice would be the most acceptable offering he could make.

"Bring that man over to the fire," he directed, pointing to me.

My wrist-cords were loosed, my ankles were fastened only with a spancel, and strong hands jerked me to my feet. Taking short steps I advanced to where the girl lay with her head on her father's breast.

Black Hoof selected a charred stick from the fire and stood staring at us, his eyes blank as though he did not see us. His warriors watched him with much awe. His spirit was far away up in the mountains communing with his medicine. He was asking his *manito* which of the three victims would be most acceptable.

Ward stood behind him, his lean face working in helpless rage for fear the girl would be the choice, thereby costing him a new wife. I felt deathly sick, physically sick, fearing she was marked for death, fearing she was reserved for worse than death.

Suddenly Black Hoof began shivering, then threw back his head and for a moment stared

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about him as if to collect his scattered senses. Reaching down he pulled the girl from her father. She had swooned and was at least spared these few minutes of awful dread. The charred stick hovered over her white face, then was withdrawn and darted at mine.

Instinctively I closed my eyes, but as the stick failed to leave its mark I opened them and beheld Dale had been chosen! A black smooch extended from the tip of his nose to the roots of his hair, and was bisected by another mark across the bridge of his nose, and extending to his ears.

"Paint that man black," Black Hoof ordered.

Dale was very composed. He knew the worst. Perhaps he believed his death would save the girl. In a steady voice he said to me:

"Morris, I am sorry for you. Only God knows how I feel about Pat. I've been worse than a fool. Don't tell her when she wakes up. Get the Cousin woman to take her out of sight. It will be very hard but I will try to go through it like a man."

"If there is anything I could do!" I cried.

He shook his head and threw it back and his lips were drawn tight.

"I am to blame. It's best this way. You came after me to help me. That was good and foolish of you. Pray God she will be spared. Pray God you will be spared. They'll be satisfied with my death for a while. I think I shall go through it very well."

They pulled me away and fell to rubbing the unfortunate man's face and neck with charcoal. Cousin's sister with a magnificent show of strength gathered the unconscious girl in her arms and walked toward the woods. Ward would have stopped her, but she hissed like a snake in his face, and there was a hardness in the blue eyes he could not withstand.

As she disappeared with her burden Black Hoof said something to lost sister's red husband. This warrior, very loath to miss the spectacle of a burning, sullenly glided after the women. I feared he was sent to bring them back, but as they did not return I knew he was ordered to stand guard over them.

Now the opening was filled with the Shawnees, word having passed that Black Hoof was about to appease his war-medicine. Only the scouts and lost sister's man remained out. Dale was stood on his feet and his upper garments were torn off from him. As they offered to lead him to the stake he struck their hands aside and with firm step walked inside the circle of brush which had been heaped up some five feet from the stake.

I closed my eyes and endeavored not to witness the scene but was unable to keep them closed. With a spancel rope fastened to his ankles Dale was further secured by a long cord tied around one wrist and fastened some fifteen feet up the trimmed sapling.

When the flames began to bite on one side he could hobble around the post to the opposite side. As the flames spread he would become very active, but each revolution around the post would shorten the slack of the wrist-cord. With the entire circle of fuel ablaze he would slowly roast. Black Hoof muttered some gibberish and applied the torch.

As the first billow of smoke rose and before the savages could commence their dancing and preliminary tortures, Ericus Dale threw back his head and loudly prayed:

"O God, protect my little girl! O God, have mercy upon me!"

Black Hoof jeered him, sardonically crying:

"The white man makes medicine to his white *manito*. Let Big Turtle * try him with a mouthful of fire. We will see if the white *manito* is weak or afraid to help his child."

A BURLY warrior scooped up coals on a piece of bark and with a fiendish grin leaped through the smoke. Two rifle shots, so close together as to be almost one, shattered the tense silence as the savages held their breath to enjoy every symptom of the excruciating agony. Dale went down on his knees, a small blue hole showing where the bullet mercifully had struck his heart. Big Turtle leaped backward and fell into the burning brush. A warrior, acting mechanically, dragged the Turtle clear of the flames. He was stone-dead.

For several moments the Indians were incapable of motion, so astounding was this interference with their sport. It was the scream of a panther that awoke them to furious activity. Black Hoof shouted for his men to catch the white scout. Then he turned on me and raised his ax. The act was involuntary, for at once dropping his arm he ordered his men to extinguish the fire and to see I did not escape. Then he hurried into the forest.

The fire was stamped out and Dale's body removed to one side. I asked them to cover the dead man with a blanket, which they readily did. Now lost sister returned, this time leading Patricia. I called to her in Shawnee:

"Bring the white girl here. Does she know her father is dead?"

"I told her. The men said he was killed by a white bullet," was the sullen reply.

"Leave her with me and wash the black from his face," I said.

She brought her charge to me. Patricia's eyes were hot as if with fever. She dropped beside me and stared wildly. Then she began to remember and said—

"My father is dead, they tell me."

"He is dead. He suffered none. It is as he wished. He could not escape. He is at peace."

"Life is so terrible," she mumbled. "Death

*Also Daniel Boone's Shawnee name in later years.

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is so peaceful. Death is so beautiful. Then one is so safe."

She gave a little scream and collapsed with her head resting on my bound hands. But although her slender frame shook convulsively she shed no tears.

I tried to talk to her as I would to a little child. After a while she rose and her composure frightened me. She walked to her father. Lost sister had removed the telltale black. The girl kneeled and kissed him and patted his hair. Then returning to me, she quietly said:

"He looks very peaceful. Very happy. I am glad he did not have to suffer. The bullet that took his life was very kind. It must be very beautiful to be dead."

She ceased speaking and slowly began stretching her arms above her head, and with a long-drawn scream she fell over backward and I knew she had lost her reason.

CHAPTER X

OUR MEDICINE GROWS STRONGER

THE Shawnees' anxiety to start for the Ohio almost became a panic. The tragic manner in which they had been robbed of their victim, the screaming defiance of young Cousin, together with their losses in warriors, convinced them something was radically wrong with their war-medicine. Outwardly Black Hoof remained calm but I knew he was greatly worried. His medicine had designated Dale for the torture, and then had permitted a bullet to release the man.

Nor was it any small influence which the girl's condition exerted in this desire to retreat. She seemed to be stunned. She walked about, but without appearing to hear or see her captors. There was none of the savages who did not believe her terrible scream prefaced her crossing the dividing-line between reason and insanity.

As an insane person she was under the special protection of the great *manito*, and black wo to him who interfered with her. The chief was eager to abandon her to be picked up by the settlers at Howard's Creek, but she clung tenaciously to Cousin's sister. The latter displayed no emotion over this preference, yet she did not repulse the girl. She even was gentle in caring for her.

Ward was for finishing me out of hand, but Black Hoof insisted I should carry packs and make myself useful before being dispensed with. Then again I would be something to display at the villages and something to dance about when it came to appeasing the ghosts of the slain warriors. We broke camp that night, and with malicious ingenuity Ward strapped packs on my shoulders until my back buckled. As he finished and was promising to thrust his knife into my legs if I displayed any weariness, Cousin's sister came up and sharply directed him to remove the packs as I was to serve as a litter-bearer.

"The white woman asks for him," she said. "Catahecassa gives him to me to help carry the medicine-woman."

Ward raged, but Black Hoof upheld the girl; and although I knew Patricia was too insensible of her surroundings to ask for any one, I was keen to serve her. Lost sister had fashioned a rude litter out of rawhide and two saplings, slack between the poles so the girl could not roll out. To my surprize she stepped between the saplings at the forward end and called on me to pick up the other end and march. I considered it to be a man's work, but she made nothing of it, and never called a halt that she might rest.

In the morning the hunters brought in some deer-meat and turkeys, and we camped long enough to eat. Once more Ward endeavored to prevail upon the chief to put me out of the way. He played upon Black Hoof's superstitions very cunningly by declaring the war-medicine would be very weak until I was killed. The chief was impressed, else he never would have come to stare at me.

It happened, however, that Patricia was delirious, and it was my hand on her head that seemed to quiet her. Lost sister told a noble lie by volunteering the information that it was my presence that kept the girl quiet. Black Hoof and his braves had a great fear of the girl when she began her rambling talk. They believed she was surrounded by ghosts and talking with them. So Ward's request was refused, and stern orders were given that I should not be harmed. When the home villages were reached, he added, I might be burned.

When we made our second camp on the Kanawha I called Black Hoof to me. I had been staked out in spread-eagle fashion and my guards had placed saplings across my body and were preparing to lie down on the ends at each side of me. I assured the chief there was no danger of my running away, as my medicine would wither and die, did I forsake the great *manito's* child; and I asked him to relieve me of the cords and saplings. He told the warriors to omit the cords.

The next time we halted to snatch a few hours' sleep he ordered that no more saplings be placed across me, that it would be sufficient to tie my ankles and wrists. This was a great relief. During this portion of the march the girl seemed oblivious to her surroundings, also to the fact she was a captive. She showed a strong preference for lost sister's company, and would glance about worriedly if the young woman left her sight.

So it devolved on the two of us, both white, to care for her. There were times when she babbled of far-away scenes, of Williamsburg

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and her old home, of the streets of Norfolk and Richmond. She talked with those she had known as children. When in this condition the Indians were glad to keep away from us. Even Ward would not willingly remain within hearing of her sweet voice could he avoid so doing. And, alas! There were other times when she was almost violent, when only lost sister could soothe and quiet her.

By the time we reached the mouth of the Great Kanawha no guard was kept over me that I could perceive; nor were my limbs any longer bound at night. At each camp lost sister ranged the woods and brought in roots and herbs and made strange-smelling messes in a camp kettle and assiduously dosed the girl.

Rafts were quickly knocked together and the crossing made to the Indian shore. I had expected the band to dig out hidden canoes and descend to the mouth of the Scioto. Instead we struck into a trail across-country. The path was well worn, and the fork we followed ended at the Scioto above Chillicothe, the principal Shawnee town.

Much of the distance Patricia walked, although the litter was taken along for her convenience. Lost sister talked with me at times and I began to feel that the barrier between us was much lower. But she never spoke of the settlements or her brother. Her talk was always a red talk and she never addressed me except in Shawnee.

From her I learned we were making for Cornstalk's Town, some twenty-five miles above Chillicothe, located on Scippo Creek. Among border men this region was known as the Pickaway Plains. Near our destination was Grenadier Squaw's Town, named after Cornstalk's gigantic sister.

I SUFFERED no incivility during the overland march. My status became that of an attendant on the great *manito's* medicine-child. Patricia continued in a dazed state of mind, but after two days of arduous travel I detected her weeping. Lost sister enigmatically warned:

"She is another woman. She is more like the woman she once was. She must keep close to her *manito*."

I could interpret this only to mean that the girl was recovering from her mental shock and was recalling bits of the past, and that she was safe only so long as the savages believed her to be insane. At our last camp from Cornstalk's Town Patricia insisted on walking beside me when the trace would permit it and she startled me by saying—

"My father was good to me."

"Do you remember me?" I asked.

"Remember you, Basdel? Why, of course. What a queer question." Then with a little frown she sighed and complained. "But I don't understand why I am here with you and these Indians. I wonder if it is a bad dream, if I will soon wake up."

I blundered along the best I could, striving to say nothing which might upset her. She suddenly refused to talk and began displaying much physical nervousness. Lost sister promptly took her in hand and led her some distance in advance of me. That was the day the band split up, the bulk of the warriors leaving us to go to their different villages. Half a dozen remained to press on to Cornstalk's Town.

Ward was among those who left us and he was unwilling to go. His departure was a great relief to me. His presence frightened the girl, although she gave no sign of remembering him as having been a factor in her life. It was due entirely to lost sister's appeal to Black Hoof that the renegade was ordered to Chillicothe.

As he was leaving us he promised me:

"I'll yet see you eating fire. That white squaw will see me again."

"I'll dance your mangy scalp some time," I retorted.

Whereat he used terms of abuse he had picked up from traders, and I struck him with my fist. Black Hoof stopped him from killing me, and threatened me with torture if I offended again. Then he ordered Ward to go.

The chief continued with us to Cornstalk's Town, but Cornstalk was not there; so he went in search of him at Grenadier Squaw's Town. Before leaving he gave orders that I was not to be molested so long as I did not attempt to escape. The town was inhabited by women and children largely, with a dozen men left to act as hunters.

It was plain that the fighting men of the tribe were gathering somewhere, probably at Chillicothe. Patricia was believed to be in touch with the *manito*, and was feared and respected accordingly. The days that followed were not unhappy for me; and Patricia appeared to be contented in a numb sort of way.

My own reaction to the anxieties and fears of our captivity devitalized me to a certain degree, I believed; else, I would not have been contented to settle down to the drowsy existence of village life. I did no hunting. I was a companion to the girl when she wished for my company. Aside from that capacity the Indians looked on me as I had been a tree.

I talked on general subjects with lost sister, always waiting for her to blaze the trace our words were to follow. Her red husband remained aloof from her from the day she took charge of Patricia. Whether he resented her companionship with us I do not know, and after our arrival he disappeared for a time.

I discovered I was lacking in curiosity as to what each morrow had in store for us. It savored of the indifference of the fatalist. But I did come to the alert when I observed Patricia

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was rapidly returning to normal. I remembered lost sister's warning, "She must keep close to her *manito*." I was forced to repeat these words to her.

It was one of the hardest tasks I ever undertook. She suffered deeply when she began to grasp my meaning. She began to remember things concretely. Yet life was the stake, and the fact that my life was also involved helped her much. With the aid of lost sister I taught her how to be ever on her guard, how to carry herself when in the presence of the silent but ever watchful Indians.

Once the shock wore off somewhat she found it was not difficult to keep up her rôle. The most effective way to allay any suspicion was for her to talk aloud to herself. The savages believed she was holding conversation with inmates of the invisible world, and drew away from her. But while she improved, my lethargy continued. My physical and mental strength seemed to be sapped. I was content to lie on the bank of the creek, my mind idling with vagaries.

SOME six weeks passed in this desultory fashion, then Cornstalk and Black Hoof returned to the village with three warriors and a negro woman. The woman had been captured at Sapling Grove within three hundred yards of Captain Evan Shelby's house, the woman told me. She also informed me that her captors were led by a very large man, much whiter than any of his companions, and that he talked good English.

This description fitted either John Logan or Will Emery, the Cherokee half-breed. I decided the man was Logan. The woman was treated kindly. Immediately on arrival the two chiefs retired to a wigwam for a long talk. Then Black Hoof sent for me and Patricia. I warned her to pay no attention to them, and to talk much to herself. She acted admirably and was kept in the wigwam only a few minutes.

Cornstalk had watched her closely, and both he and Black Hoof were uneasy and relieved when she departed. Toward me their manner was incisive, and they demanded certain information. As I knew conditions had changed vastly since I was captured I talked freely and improvised considerably. There was no military value to the news I imparted.

Cornstalk, who was a large man and of a commanding appearance, and possessing unusual intellectual powers, was keen to learn about individuals, especially about Daniel Boone. He asked how many men Boone could lead against the Shawnees. I told him all border men would be glad to serve under him, that he was collecting fighting men when I was taken prisoner.

"Your tongue is split," Cornstalk warned. "Be careful, or we will say that young medicine-woman does not need a liar to care for her. Be careful, or your tongue will be pulled out. The Shawnees will be glad to warm themselves at your fire. That man was sent to the Falls of the Ohio. He has returned to the settlements. He commands three forts in the lower valleys. Will he head riflemen to battle, or stay at the forts?"

I truthfully answered that I believed he would be given an important command. And I explained how Colonel Lewis would be over him as he would be over many other brave leaders. They knew Lewis and feared him. Their faces were very glum until I repeated Connolly's message to Charles Lewis that peace with the tribes was very possible. Then they smiled grimly and Cornstalk informed me.

"Your Dunmore ordered his Long Knives to march against the Shawnee towns ten sleeps after you were captured."*

I was startled at the information and glanced through the opening of the wigwam as if expecting to see the lean militiamen breaking from the woods. The chief added:

"But they seem to have trouble in starting. Perhaps they are very old men and can not walk fast. I shall send my young men across the Ohio to dig them out of the mud."

"The Cherokees will not join the Shawnees," I ventured.

Cornstalk eyed me menacingly.

"They will not because they have old women among them. They put their powder in bags, and put the bags in caves. Their powder is spoiled. After I whip your army the Cherokees will carry their axes into the Carolinas."

I believed the Cherokees would do this, if our army were whipped. Turning to Black Hoof Cornstalk asked—

"How long before you roast this white man?"

"After we have whipped the army of Dunmore and Lewis and Boone. Now he waits on the medicine-woman. After the battle there will be many white women to wait on her."

I was dismissed and on reaching the open air I discovered I had left all my apathy behind me. The importance of time and the imperative need of immediate action was burned into my brain by Black Hoof's words. I sought Patricia and found her seated on the bank, staring into the sluggish waters.

"I was thinking of you, Basdel," she greeted, and she reached her hand to me. "I was remembering what I said in Salem about your rifle. I'm sorry. I did wrong."

"Heavens, child! Abuse the rifle all you will!" I cried.

"It was abuse of you and of all that your rifle stood for. I mocked you because you were from the border. Poor father! He knew many

*Expedition against Indian towns ordered July 24th. Boone returned from Kentucky to the settlements August 27th.

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Indians, but he did not understand them. Town ways seem mighty small and of no account now."

"Patsy, you must get a grip on yourself. We must get clear of this village at once. We must get back to Virginia."

She shivered and her eyes dilated as she stared at me and she muttered:

"I dread the woods, the silence, the darkness. The wolves howling at night. Worst of all is the creeping horror of being chased. No! No! I can't stand any more, Basdel. The black horror comes over me when I let myself think of it. The dank woods—the silence—the awful stealth of night. No, no, Basdel. Let me die here."

"Patsy, grip yourself! Good God! You can't stay among these beggars. They think you are insane. That's why they've spared you. But there's going to be a battle soon. If they win they'll bring many prisoners here. You must not be here then."

She interrupted me with a little heart-broken cry and clapped her hands to her eyes to blot out some horrid picture. It was harsh, but the way she was inclining led to permanent madness.

"We will steal away and make the Ohio. The Indians are busy planning for the big battle. They'll not spare many men to seek us. I will take you back to Virginia and across the mountains."

"Or we will both die," she whispered. "That wouldn't be bad. To die and be out of it all—But I mustn't speak for you, Basdel."

"You speak for both of us," I comforted. "Death isn't terrible. This is." And I swept my hand in a half-circle at the Shawnee wigwams forming the village. "Say nothing to Cousin's sister. I will make my plans at once. A gun, some powder and lead, and then we will go."

"And never come back to them alive?" she insisted, and she leaned forward and stared intently into my eyes.

"Never alive, sweetheart," I soothed.

"That is much better," she quietly remarked. "And here comes my sister. She has been very good to me. I wish we could take her with us. Over the mountains, or to death."

"She refused to go over the mountains with her brother. We must tell her nothing," I warned.

Lost sister gave me a quick glance as she came up. She gazed at Patricia in silence for a moment, then warned:

"The white woman must keep close to her *manito*. The eyes of the eagle and the ears of the fox are in this village."

"She is having bad thoughts," I told her. "Lead her thoughts through new paths."

As I strolled away I heard her beginning a Shawnee myth, in which it was explained why the wet-hawk feeds while flying, and how the small turkey-buzzard got its tufted head.

ACCORDING to the notches cut in my long stick it was the first day of September. Now that Cornstalk was back and in conference with Black Hoof the village became a center of importance. Notable chiefs and medicine-men of the northern tribes began to assemble. Lost sister pointed out to me Puck-e-shin-wa, father of a six-year-old boy, who was to become one of the most remarkable Indian characters in our history, under the name of Tecumseh.

Young Ellinipsico, son of Cornstalk, was there, gay in his war-trappings and eager for the battle. Blue Jacket, another famous Shawnee chief and warrior, was in attendance. Of the allied tribes I saw Chiyawee the Wyandot, Scoppathus the Mingo, Redhawk the Delaware, and most interesting of all, John Logan, chief of the Mingos.

He was the son of a Frenchman, who was adopted by the Oneidas, but he always claimed kin to the Cayuga, the term "Mingo" being loosely applied by our border men to any fragments of the Iroquois living outside the Long House in New York province. Logan came and went inside an hour, spending all his time in a secret conference with Cornstalk.

I saw him as he strode through the little village, looking neither to right nor left, saturnine of countenance. He showed his white blood, being much lighter in complexion than the full-bloods. A warrior walked behind him, carrying his gun. The chief himself carried a long wand decorated with the ten or twelve scalps he had taken since Colonel Cressup massacred his people at Baker's Bottom.

Young Cherokees, stolen away from their nation to be in at the death of the white race in Virginia, were present without leaders. Black Hoof's long absence from the village was explained when a full score Ottawas filed into the opening and sang their war-song. Their spokesman loudly announced that they were but the advance of many of their tribe.

I feared I had waited too long, and was much relieved to learn from lost sister that warriors and chiefs were to move to Chillicothe at once and there await the coming of the western bands. Their going would leave our village practically deserted except for aged and broken men and the women and children.

Lost sister said her husband was eager to take the path, and that it was Cornstalk's plan to cross the Ohio instead of waiting to be attacked in his own country. She was vague as to the chief's exact plans once he had crossed the river, but by joining her brief statements together I was led to believe Cornstalk had learned that the Virginia forces had been split into two armies, and that the masterly red

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strategist planned to surprize and annihilate one, and then attack the second. This information alone was of sufficent importance for me to risk my life many times in order to apprise my superiors of the trap being set for them.

By the time the sun was half-way down the afternoon sky all the chiefs were moving down the river bound for Chillicothe. Young Ellinipsico and a mixed band of warriors were left to arrange for guarding the girl. He would depart for Chillicothe on the morrow. I went in search of the girl and met lost sister standing by a big honey-tree. She asked me if I had seen her husband, and looked worried when I shook my head.

"He said he would not go without seeing me, and yet he is not here in the village. Your white woman—she walks far from her *manito*. It is bad for her."

"She must leave here," I boldly said. "I must take her away." I had had no intention of taking her into my confidence, but I realized it would be impossible to make a start without her missing the girl. So I took the desperate course and did what I had warned Patricia not to do.

She drew her knife and cut some straight marks on the honey-tree.

"You see those?" she asked.

I bowed my head. Without explaining the relevancy of her question, she turned and walked rapidly toward the village. I stared at the marks and they told me nothing. There was nothing pictorial about them. I followed her among the wigwams, and was in time to see her leading Patricia into her wigwam. I sauntered after them, obsessed by the notion that strange forces were at work. The village seemed to be quiet and sleepy and yet the air was surcharged with threats of things about to happen.

When the storm broke it was from a quarter entirely different from anything I could have imagined. My first intimation that something unusual was happening was when a Shawnee ran into the village and began talking to Ellinipsico, who was lounging sleepily on the grass before his father's wigwam. I heard Ellinipsico exclaim:

"He must not be hurt. He has felt the hand of the great *manito* on his head."

I looked about for a weapon, so that I might go down fighting, for I first thought the stranger Indians were demanding me for a plaything, not understanding my true status as servant to the medicine-woman. I knew this was not the solution of the affair when Ellinipsico jumped to his feet and ran to the edge of the village, at every bound shouting to the Ottawas to hurry back to the village.

A loud outcry answered him from the forest. To my amazement Ellinipsico slowed down his mad pace and appeared to be reluctant to enter the woods. The few Shawnees and Mingos in the village followed his example in timidity. Then above the war-cry of the Ottawas rose the roar of Baby Kirst, punctuated by the crack of a rifle and the death-yell of a savage.

Now I understood. The Ottawas, ignorant of Kirst's condition, had met him blundering through the woods and had essayed to halt his progress. He promptly had offered fight, and they were at it, with the odds greatly in favor of the Indians. In my excitement I ran to where Ellinipsico stood. He was dancing with rage and fright. Beholding me, he ordered me to dive into the growth and stop the fight.

I glanced back and saw lost sister and Patricia leaving the wigwam. Lost sister began leading her charge toward the south end of the village and jerked her head at me as though calling on me to follow. It was driven into my mind that this was the time to escape with the girl. I plunged into the woods and no Indian cared to dog my steps.

I made as if to go to the scene of the fearful confusion, but once out of sight of Ellinipsico and his men I turned to intercept the course taken by lost sister and Patricia. I miscalculated the distance, or else the combatants made a rapid shift of ground, for before I knew it I was standing on the edge of a most ferocious struggle. Kirst was still mounted and bleeding from a dozen wounds. His long rifle was being swung for a club.

My first view of him was as he splintered the butt on an Ottawa head. He bawled in triumph. The Ottawas, expecting no diversion so near the village, were armed only with their knives and axes. A fellow leaped on to the horse and tried to stab him from behind, and one immense hand reached back and caught him by the neck and held him in mid-air and squeezed the life from the painted body, and then hurled him among the remaining warriors.

The girl must come first, but it was not in my heart to pass without contributing something to Kirst's advantage. I snatched up a war-club, dropped by a slain savage, and hurled it into the thick of them, bowling over two. Kirst's horse went down, disembowled. Now Kirst was at a great disadvantage, but his long arms gathered up two of the Ottawas, and I heard their ribs crack, as with a pleased grunt the simple fellow contracted his embrace.

But now they were piling upon him, striking and stabbing, a living mound which for the moment concealed the big fellow. Then the mass began to disintegrate, and savages staggered back and fell dead, or suffering from terrible wounds. Kirst rose to his feet only to fall on his face as if shot through the head, although he received no wound at the time that I could perceive.

My last glance was fleeting, but it sufficed to count six silent forms of Ottawas who would never cross the Ohio to attack Lord Dunmore's

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armies. One Indian, gasping with pain, with both arms hanging like rags, lurched by me but not seeing me, his gaping mouth trying to sound his death-song. Ellinipsico was calling on his men to follow him, and I sped away.

Baby Kirst had fulfilled his destiny and would babble his way through the forests no more. The force which had destroyed his reason had paid the full price the law of compensation had worked out.

Could I find the girl without returning to the village I hoped the confusion resulting from the bloody struggle would permit me to steal away with her. I swung back toward the opening and soon discovered Patricia and lost sister. The latter on beholding me called me by name, the first time she had ever done so. As I ran to them she fiercely said:

"Take your white woman and go! Cross the Ohio but do not go up the Kanawha. Follow the Guyandotte or Sandy, into the valley of the Clinch. You must hurry!"

As if the day had not been hideous enough a bepainted warrior burst through the undergrowth as she finished, with his bow raised and an arrow drawn to the head. Beneath the war vermilion I recognized lost sister's husband. She threw out her arms and smiled scornfully and cried:

"You hide in the bushes to watch me? I thought so."

Then she was down with an arrow buried to the feathers.

I LEAPED into the bushes and grappled with the murderer before he could draw another arrow from his quiver. He dropped his bow and endeavored to hurl me to the ground. As we whirled about I saw Patricia kneeling beside lost sister and striving to pet her back to life. One glimpse, and then all my attention was needed for my adversary. He was quicker than I, and his freshly oiled body made him hard to hold; but I was far the stronger.

"His knife, Basdel! Look out!" screamed Patricia; and I was glad to note there was no madness in her voice.

I had him by his right wrist, my left arm shoved under his chin and into his red throat. The girl's gaze sent my gaze downward. He was trying to work the knife from its sheath before I could force him backward or break his neck. But the sheath was too long for the knife and he could not reach the handle with his fingers until he had forced the blade upward by pinching the tip of the sheath. I did not try to interfere with his maneuver, but settled myself solidly to hold him from escaping.

"The knife, Basdel!" she shrilly repeated. Then she nearly upset my calculations by trying to thrust a bough between my foe's feet. Only by a nimble maneuver did I escape being tripped; but it was heartening to know she could respond to my needs.

"Stand clear!" I panted. "I have him!"

"But the knife!" she despairingly cried.

"He's getting it for me!" I replied.

Now he had managed to work the haft clear of the leather and his left hand was closing on it. His eyes told me that much. Instantly I changed my tactics. I dropped my left arm to seize his left wrist. I released his right wrist and with my free hand tore the weapon from his grasp. He struck me in the head with his free fist, but I felt it none as he did not have the white man's trick of delivering a buffet. We went down side by side, and by the time we had rolled over once he was dead by his own knife.

Retaining the weapon, I ran to Patricia as she collapsed by the side of the dying woman.

"I am all right! Get up!" I commanded.

Cousin's sister smiled grimly, and whispered:

"He has been watching us. He saw me come here when I scratched the tree. He has been hiding— The marks I made on the honey-tree —Look behind it—the pea-vines— Tell Shelby I send him a little sister—" And she had solved all her problems, and had passed into the compassion of the *Manito* whose gentleness and understanding surpass all comprehension.

Patricia was weeping softly, as one who sorrows with an aching heart, but not as one who is afraid. I gathered her up in my arms and made for the honey-tree close by. I stood her on her feet, and exhorted her to be brave as the time had come for us to take to flight. I plunged into the pea-vines behind the tree. A new thrill of life fired me as I fished out my own rifle, a powder-horn, shot-pouch and linen patches. Cousin's sister had even remembered to provide a roll of buckskin and an awl for mending our moccasins, and a small package of smoked meat.

Thus armed once more I took the girl's hand and stole through the woods, following the well-beaten path that led to Chillicothe, and planning to swing to the east and skirt the town under the cover of darkness. I desired to emerge on the Ohio at a point opposite the mouth of the Big Sandy. For some time we could hear the wailing and howling of the Shawnees in Cornstalk's Town as they mourned for the dead Ottawas, and Patricia was sadly frightened. My ears were tingling for fear they would catch the cry of discovery, but young Ellinipsico was there instead of Black Hoof, and our flight was undiscovered.

TO BE CONCLUDED

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A LITTLE HELP FOR HAWKINS

by W C TUTTLE

Author of "Promoting Polecat Perkins," "Hashknife—Philanthropist," etc.

"LEMME alone! Dog-gone yuh, lemme alone. Chuck, get out of that trunk! Leggo that necktie. Naw, yuh can't wear that green vest. That lawn-gee-ree cost me six dollars in Miles. Aw, Chuck, you can't wear per-fume with a face like yours. Drop that bottle. Didja ever try buyin'——"

"Slim," says Muley Bowles, "you're in love. Crabbin' all the time, and right now you've got a face——"

"That's my face, cowboy," snaps Slim Hawkins, the latest impediment of the Cross J outfit.

"I know," agrees Muley, sad-like; "she's one awful drawback, but just the same, when a feller gets touchy about his vests and per-fume——"

"That ain't per-fume," declares Telescope Tolliver. "That's hair tonic. Slim's usin' it on his hands, so he won't have to buy some fur gloves this Fall."

"Yeah?" grunts Slim. "Better than vaniller extract."

"I never used vaniller," declares Telescope.

"No? Is that so? What made yuh smell like a church sociable then?"

"Well, I never took a shot of hooch at a dance and then tried to prove an alibi by drinkin' heel-yuh-trope per-fume."

"Wasn't he a sweet-scented daisy," grins Chuck Warner, wiggling his ears. "Poor old Slim. Thought he was goin' to waltz with Ramona McGuire; so he drinks a bottle of stink-good and burn-bad, and then Ramona turned him down for the noble son of old man Warner.

"Slim had to set down and smell of himself. Reminded me of one of them Chinese idol things, which sets cross-legged and exudes smells. Incense, they calls 'em. I remember once when I was in Shanghai——"

"Drop your voice!" yelps Slim, looking up from a magazine he just brought from town. "Take it out to the corral."

"When I was in Canton——"

"Montana, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming or Arizona?" asks Slim.

"Can't I get out of the U. S. A.?" asks Chuck, sad-like.

"Aw, shut up, or tell the truth, Chuck—and let me alone."

"This story needs a Chinese background, Slimmie Hawkins."

"You ain't said what makes you look so sad," reminds Muley. "Honest to grandma, Slim, you need cheerin' up."

Slim just grunts and shoves his nose deeper into the magazine. We looks at each other, and then Muley picks up my banjo and, after hitting a few discords, sings soft and low:

"His hear-r-r-t is bowed down.
He has lost all hope;
No more does he smell
Of heel-yuh-trope.
His——"

"Stop it, you fat horse-thief!" wails Slim. "By golly, I'd just as soon live in a beehive. Gabble, gabble, gabble!"

"Bees don't gabble," says Chuck. "Bees quack like lizards."

Slim marks the place in his magazine, and then glares at us.

"If you strike him, Slim, it will break my heart," whispers Chuck. "I will never smile again."

"You're among friends, Slim," says Telescope, serious-like. "Uncinch your immortal soul and tell us why thou art so sad among your eyes."

"Yuh would, eh?"

Slim rolls a fresh cigaret, thoughtful-like, and then—

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"Suppose yuh left your old home under suspicion?"

"The home?" asks Muley.

"No, you. Suppose your relations figured out that you wasn't worth shucks. Suppose you had a aunt with a lot of money. Then this here aunt shuffles off this mortal coil, but behind her she leaves a will.

"This here will is pe-culiar. This here aunt figures that you ain't no good. Sabe. She opines that you're headed in the general direction of the penitentiary, but she gives you a chance. All you've got to do is to get married before the first of the month, and——"

Slim puffs slow-like on his cigaret, and after while he grins, foolish-like.

"And be able to invest ten thousand dollars' worth of jaw-bone. Sabe? By the first of the month you've got to prove your standing in the community by bein' able to spend ten thousand dollars you ain't got. Wouldn't that will make anybody look sad?"

Slim pokes his nose back into the magazine and the rest of us sets there and looks at each other. After while Chuck says—

"Slim, would you mind recitin' that again?"

"Aw-w-w, ——!" wails Slim, and throws the magazine across the room. Then he stamps out and slams the door.

"May the divil fly away with us," gasps Chuck. "We're being associated with a plutocrat—under conditions. No wonder he's sore."

"I just wonder where his aunt lives," says Muley.

"The dead don't usually leave a permanent address," reminds Telescope. "She sure was a hard-hearted old lady."

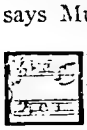
"He can't do it," declares Chuck. "No cowpuncher could. I wonder if he was figurin' on Ramona when he drank the perfume?"

"Slim's heart is all right," opines Telescope.

"All of his insides are," agrees Chuck, "but bein' complete in your interior don't attract the fair sex. Any girl he'd lead to the altar would have to wear blinders."

"Aw, he could find a girl, I reckon," says I, "but he'd never be able to invest that money. He might as well smile and kiss his inheritance good-by."

"Hard to smile under them conditions," says Muley. "Poor old Slim—listen!"



FROM out by the corral comes Slim's voice, wailing and sad-like:

"Be-e-at the drum slowly and play the fife lowly;
Play the dead march as you bear me-e-e along.
Take me-e-e out to the pra-ree-e,
And throw the sod o'er me-e-e——"

"Aw, that's awful," wails Muley "The poor critter is suffering and it's against the law to put him out of his misery. There ought to be a law that lets yuh put a human out of their misery the same as yuh do a broken-legged bronc."

"Go ahead," says Telescope. "I'll swear it was self defense."

"That's a Turkish way of looking at things," says Chuck. "Don't decease a feller just because he's suffering. Why not lend him a helping hand?"

"He'd bite it," declares Muley. "He'd bite the hand that fed him."

"He ain't hungry," says I, "and if he got too snappy we could get a muzzle. This here outfit has been prone to pack a hammer instead of a jack-screw. Seems that there ain't nobody too low for us to stoop down and tap 'em a little lower. Let's try raising up the fallen. Bring a little sunshine and fewer stars into other people's lives."

"Do we sing before or after the collection?" whispers Telescope. "I ain't been to church for so long that——"

Come Slim's voice, sighing on the breeze:

"Out in this sad wor-r-r-ld alo-o-o-ne,
Nothin' but sorrow I see-e-e.
I am no-o-o-body's dar-r-r-ling,
No-o-o-body ca-a-hares for me-e-e-e."

"Caruso never had a voice like that," says Muley.

"Not in any phonygraft song I ever heard," agrees Telescope. "Sounds like a jassack tangled up in barb-wire."

"It ain't the singer, but the song," says Muley, sad-like.

"Well," Chuck stands up and looks at us. "Well, do we show a united front against the world in favor of Slim, or do we side-step and let him skid?"

"Don't wiggle your ears," begs Telescope. "I tries hard to believe against reincarnation of souls, but every time you wiggle your ears—sure, I'll do what I can."

"We'll keep it dark," explains Muley, "and work unhonored and unsung."

"And unhung, I hope," adds Chuck.

We shakes hands on it, and then Muley recites:

"Four souls with but a single thought:
To help a brother in distress.
Four noble souls filled with desire,
Three prevaricators—one——liar.
Some mess."

"I wouldn't take that from anybody but you, Muley," says Chuck.

"He sure answers to roll-call," laughs Telescope.

Old Oreana McGuire was the father of Ramona. I won't swear to the spelling of the word "Oreana," but that's the way she sounds. It's a word they uses down in the Southwest, and means the same as "Maverick."

Oreana had seven head of cows, which he brought with him, and which were likely

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"oreanas," the same being unbranded calves, with no pa, ma or visible guardian angel. Anyway, Oreana owned 'em, a shack, a six-shooter, a grouch against punchers, and Ramona.

Ramona's mother was Mexican. "Jay Bird" Whittaker said that Ramona was the same mixture as glycerin and nitric acid. Mrs. McGuire died from ptomaine poisoning, which was a polite definition of a mixture of *tortillas* and *tequila*. Old Oreana declared himself publicly and audibly that no danged forty-a-month puncher would ever be Ramona's blushing bridegroom.

"Be all th' saints, she's too good for a puncher," says he. "I'll have no saddle-slickers in me family. It's bad enough to have to support Ramona, without takin' another independint to me bosom, so it is. Kape off th' grass."

I don't prognosticate on the rest of Yaller Rock County, but I know of two punchers who liked Ramona—fine. There's only two other girls in riding distance of the Cross J—Susie Abernathy and Lizzie Smith. Muley has been hanging around Susie so long that the assessor lists him as Zeb's personal property, and Telescope has worn all the Cross J horses to a frazzle going to Piperock to see Lizzie.

Ramona was good to look upon. There was a lot of Irish in her, but even at that you've got to figure that the blood of bull-fighters also runs through her arteries at a fifty-fifty clip with the Irish gore.

"She's kinda pretty," opines Slim, "but I don't want to make love to no female which I've got to search for a knife every time I goes to see her. If I was her husband I'd wear armor and sleep in the corral. She can't cook nothin' but *frijoles*. *Frijoles!* My ——! Cornmeal mush and Cayenne. No wonder they fight bulls in Mexico."

The four of us goes out and climbs up on the corral fence, where we can plan things out.

"Let's consider the bride subject first," says Muley. "Who can Slim marry?"

"How about Susie?" asks Chuck.

"Think again, cowboy!" snaps Muley. "Don't be funny."

"Think a little yourself," says Chuck. "Are you setting out here as a rejection committee of one, Muley Bowles?"

"I seconds Muley's objection," says Telescope.

"Then you can go to ——!" grunts Chuck, "I've spoke my piece and it wasn't applauded," and then he goes up to the ranch-house.

"You goin' to act mean, too, Henry?" asks Muley.

"No, I ain't. I try to get along. How about Lizzie Smith?"

"Might be a idea," agrees Muley.

"Not a —— bit like it!" explodes Telescope. "Pick Susie if you must."

"Not while bunch-grass grows and cows have legs," yells Muley. "How about Ramona McGuire?"

"Vetoed," says I. "Also, I'm all through with the convention. I has met with objections to my choice of weapons. *Adios.*"

A FULL house divided don't win no pots. Here is Slim, doing nothing towards helping himself, Muley and Telescope snapping at each other, which leaves me and Chuck to uphold the honor of the combination.

I rides to town alone and finds Telescope playing solitaire in one saloon and in another I finds Muley reading a last month's newspaper. Later on they rides back, one at a time, and then Chuck comes in.

"Is Slim doing anything towards saving his inheritance?" I asks, and Chuck nods.

"Yeah—digging post-holes for a new corral, him and Jay Bird. Jay Bird asks me to grab a pick, but I never hired out to be a sexton to the south end of a corral post. See anything of the poet and the pelican? They're a fine pair."

They are. Muley is so fat that he almost has to have somebody diamond-hitch him to his saddle, and Telescope is so long that he has to ride with short stirrups to save the soles of his shoes. Muley can compose poetry, I'll say that much for him.

Chuck ain't much to look at either. Slim is made from a pole pattern, and has a long, weepy nose and tired eyes. I've got a good figure, and I'm worth the money. The rest of the bunch are cowboys, 'cause they don't know anything else, but I punch cows because it's a healthy job, and I hate doctors.

Then cometh Oreana McGuire.

"Has the Cross J gone out av business?" he asks. "Cow-poonchers dallyin' in the shade and drawin' the money they niver earn. I ho-ope I niver have cows enough that I'll have to hire a pooncher."

"You won't," says Chuck. "The cattle association has issued orders that no more mavericks are to be taken."

"Insinuatin' that I'm a cow thief?"

"Nope—warnin'. Set down and cool off. How's Ramona?"

"Chuck," chokes Oreana, "ye have more ungodly nerve than anny— You're a hawrse-faced, ear-wigglin'— Do ye mean to insult me?"

"Are you insulted? Fine! Witness it, Henry. I bet Muley four bits that I could insult Oreana, and he gave me odds of ten to one that it couldn't be done."

Oreana sets down beside us and fills his pipe.

"Don't yuh think Slim Hawkins is a fine fellow?" asks Chuck.

"That wall-eyed, crooked-nosed banshee?'

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"He's goin' to be rich. You might sell him your seven cows."

"Tell me about it, Chuck."

Oreana listens and nods over his pipe:

"Didn't I tell ye that Slim was av good stock? He'll go far, he will, indeed."

"But there is certain conditions," says I.

"Ah-hah, I towld ye," says he, the same of which he did not. "There always is. Well, well."

"But keep it dark," warns Chuck.

"I niver violates the confidences of me friends."

We watches him go out of town in his buckboard.

"Now what in —— did you tell him for?" I asks. "He'll try to marry Ramona to Slim, you danged fool."

"Aw-w-w, she wouldn't look at Slim. He'll likely sell Slim them seven cows, Henry. I'm pavin' the way to investments. Oreana will tell everybody. Let's have a drink."

We finds that Mike Pelly is sympathetic, on account of a few tests he has made of his new stock, and he asks us to tarry a while and talk politics. Mike's a Populist. We held a convention, and later on me and Chuck joined his party. We moved and seconded nominations until the convention hall gets hazy. After while Chuck says:

"Mike, you're a business man, ain't yuh? Well, suppose a man is going to inherit a lot of money. Before he gets it he's got to be able to invest ten thousand dollars, which he ain't got, to show that he's well thought of. Suppose he's a ordinary puncher like me and Henry. Now, where could he invest ten thousand he ain't got?"

"My gosh!" wails Mike. "You've got me all bewildered. What was it you was talkin' about, Chuck?"

"Now," says Chuck, deliberate-like, "I knowed what I told you at the time I told you, but right now I don't. Do you, Henry?"

"Yes," says I, "I don't."

"Would you sell Slim Hawkins your saloon?" asks Chuck.

"He ain't got the money yet, but he will have on the first of the month. You sell it to me and Henry, bein' as we're agents for Slim Hawkins."

"I will," says Mike. "For two thousand dollars. Give 'm good-will and everything. Abs'lutely. I wanna go Easht and shee ol' home. Judge Steele's in town t'day, and I'll have him fix up papers. You run the place, eh? Tha's fine."

Chuck tended bar for me and then I tended bar for him. After while Zeb Abernathy comes in to wash the trail dust out of his neck.

"How comes such a condition of affairs?" he asks.

"The West is changin', Zeb," explains Chuck. "Slim Hawkins owns this here palace of shin."

"Naw-w-w-w! Slim Hawkins? How comes that ornery, slab-sided saddle-slicker gets enough money to buy a saloon?"

Zeb drinks in every word of Chuck's explanation, along with easier things to swaller, and then he says—

"Why don't he buy cows?"

"He ain't got no visible cash, Zeb, and you know danged well that nobody trusts Slim."

"The —— they don't! Slim Hawkins? Say, that boy can have anything I've got, y' betcha. Slimmie's a upright, honorable citizen if there ever was one, and his word is as good as his bond with me. Where can I find him?"

"We're handlin' his investments," says Chuck. "Yuh see, he's got to be married by the first of the month, and he ain't got no time to monkey with finances."

"Married? Say, has he picked any female yet?"

"I don't know, Zeb. Don't think so. How many cows can he buy from you?"

"About five thousand dollars' worth, I reckon."

"All good stock," declares Chuck. "No runts, Zeb. Judge Steele is in town, and you can have him draw up the bill of sale."

"Suits me to a gnat's eyelash," nods Zeb, and hikes out of there to fix up the papers, just before Wick Smith rides in from Piperock.

"How's business?" asks Chuck.

"General merchandise is a drug on the market," he states after inoculating his nervous system. "How comes you two fellers to be pilotin' this here saloon?"

"Tendin' bar for Slim Hawkins."

"Tell the truth and shame the devil, Chuck. Slim Hawkins never had money enough to buy a drink."

"Death made him a plutocrat," says I.

"Good!" grunts Wick. "When did he die?"

"His aunt died," explains Chuck, "and left her fortune to Slim. We're his financial agents, me and Henry." And then he goes ahead and tells Wick some of the painful details.

"Slim has a lot of natcheral ability," opines Wick. "He'd do well in mostly any line—especially merchandise. Wonder if he'd consider my business in Piperock? Sell it to him for three thousand. Two thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine dollars and six bits' worth of property and two bits' worth of good-will."

"Knowin' the conditions as you does, would you give us a bill of sale to Slim?" asks Chuck.

"Just thataway," nods Wick, and we steers him out to find Judge Steele.

WHEN me and Chuck quit tending bar we've got bills of sale for a grog-shop, a general merchandise store, and a hundred and fifty head of cows. As far as we can figure there ain't nothing to prevent Slim from taking the property and never paying a cent.

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Slim ain't at the ranch when we gets back and neither is Telescope, but Muley is there. He just sort of sniffs at us and makes prohibition remarks.

"Where is the distinguished inheritor, Mr. Bowles?" asks Chuck.

Just then Telescope comes in and answers the question.

"Zeb Abernathy took Slim over to his house for supper. He said that Susie had bought some new organ music and wants Slim to sing for her."

"That's a —— lie!" chokes Muley, getting red in the face.

"Yeah?" grins Telescope. "Prognosticate, cowboy, if yuh wish, but it's a fact."

"Zeb Abernathy hates Slim," whines Muley.

"Shore," nods Telescope. "Make yourself feel good, Muley."

Muley saddled up and went to town without saying anything more and Telescope gets joyful over it.

"Suppose he went to see Lizzie?" says Chuck, chidin'-like.

"I'd—I'd—" stutters Telescope. "He won't. Wick hates Slim too much, y'betcha."

Slim don't come home that night and neither does Muley; so me and Chuck goes to town the next afternoon and the first person we meets is Oreana McGuire. He's had a few drinks and the world looks rosy to him.

"Slim's got talent," says he without any preliminary wau-wau. "He's wan av them catch-on-quick fellers."

"How and why?" asks Chuck.

"Ramona's givin' him mandolin lessons, and he can play 'Hoom, Sweet Hoom' on wan string."

"Is that sage-brush scavenger down at your house?" I asks.

"He is. Have ye annythin' to say about who comes to my house, Misther Peck?"

Me and Chuck sets down on the sidewalk and watches Oreana go back into the saloon, which belongs to Slim Hawkins.

"Learnin' him to play the mandolin," wails Chuck. "Settin' close beside that danged——"

"That's what we gets for helping him," says I. "Slim knows danged well that me and Ramona has ——"

"You and Ramona?" gasps Chuck. "You—and—Ramona? Why, you bow-legged, dish-faced range pirate, she wouldn't turn to look at you if you yelled help and fired your gun."

"I suppose she can hardly sleep nights for thinking of you," says I. "Yes, you are beautiful. If I had a face like yours I'd go through life backwards so as not to scare little children."

It took Oreana, Mike Pelly, Telescope Tolliver, Art Miller and Wick Smith to pull us apart. Muley just rode in but had no hand in spoiling a good fight.

"You horn into my business again and I'll freckle your danged nose with powder!" howls Chuck.

"You wiggle your ears at me again and I'll spoil the only accomplishment you ever had," says I.

"Boys will be boys," says Telescope. "I hope they both shoot at the same time."

"When did you buy chips in this game?" asks Muley, scowling at Telescope. "You nosey old lady."

"Now, don't drag old man Colt into this," begs Wick. "Be friendly. Where can I find Slimmie Hawkins?"

"Slim Hawkins," pronounces Muley, "is a extinct bird like the dodo as far as I'm concerned."

"He's down at my house," says Oreana. "What do ye want av him?"

"If it's any of your —— business, I have a note for him."

"A note?" asks Telescope.

"A k-n-o-t-e," spells Wick. "Know what I mean? It's my niece's birthday today, and she is invitin' Slim up to dinner, which is to be et this evenin'."

"Heh, heh, heh!" cackles Muley. "Heh, heh, heh!"

"Heh, heh, heh," parrots Telescope. "You animated by-product of a hawg factory!"

Muley takes a poke at Telescope, a mighty poke, but Wick grabbed Muley's arm and swung him around with the result that the mighty poke hit Oreana right in the nose.

I reckon that every big thing has a small beginning. They say that a cow kicked over a lamp and burned Chicago; a oak-tree grows from a small acorn; Henry Clay Peck only weighed seven pounds when he was born, et cettery.

Oreana McGuire hit me in the mouth with his elbow and I walked on Chuck's feet and the hand on the end of Oreana's elbow hit Wick in the ear, and Wick butted Muley in the stummick with his head.

I'm just telling what I really know. How I know that much is a mystery to me. Sort of dazed-like I hears somebody shoot, and I remembers reaching for my gun, but when I woke up it is dark in the corral, and a burro is standing on the slack of my torn shirt. How I got there, I don't know.

I climbed up on the fence, where I assayed myself for signs of life, but I don't find much indications. When I walk one leg goes towards Pipercck and the other towards Sliver Bend but I manages to poke around into the main street, where I finds three fellers roosting on the hitch-rack in the dark.

"Huh-Henry ain't dud-dead yet," croaks Muley.

"Death must 'a' busted his stinger," says Telescope.

"What went wrong with yuh, Henry?"

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asks Muley. "My ——, you acted terrific."

"Who got killed?" I asks.

"We ain't had no detailed report yet," says Chuck, "but we found the remains of Wick's pet coyote and 'Sage-Hen' Shawkey's old yaller cat. You smashed every window in range, and then went whoopin' across the street. We sure let you a-lone, cowboy."

"There's a blank in my life," says I.

"There wasn't any in your gun," states Telescope. "You ripped a bullet through Oreana's ca'tridge-belt and the danged old Mick went down the street explodin' like a pack of firecrackers. You shot a plug of tobacco out of Art Miller's hip pocket, too."

"You've got a gosh-awful reputation, feller," says Telescope. "Somebody must 'a' hit you on the funny-bone."

"What you got in your arms, Chuck?" I asks.

"Gallon of hooch," chuckles Muley. "The only bright spot in this here desert of distrust and destruction," and then Muley sings soft and low:

"There's a silver linin', no matter how you're pinin';
For every pizen insect there's a harmless bug.
When your stummick gets to achin',
And your heart is almost breakin',
There's a little bit o' likker in the old brown jug."

"I'm still wondering how the fight ended," says I.

"Ended ——!" croaks Chuck. "You danged ——"

"Peace," pleads Telescope. "United we stand, divided we fall apart. Are you with us, Henry?"

"I've fell apart a plenty," I admits. "The union forever, and may Slim's inheritance consist of a quart of cyanid."

"I'll smoke the pipe with you, Henry," says Chuck, "but dang your soul, you keep away from Ramona."

"Well, what do we do?" I asks after balancing the jug on my mustache for a few moments.

"Kill Slim Hawkins," pronounces Telescope.

"Three cheers," applauds Chuck. "Hope he dies in ag'ny."

"Did he go up to Smith's place?"

"We don't know," says Telescope. "You got to spreadin' lead and we all hid out. Everybody hid out."

"Tomorrow is last day of the month," states Muley. "He's gotta be married tomorrow."

"Has the investments been filled?" I asks.

"They has," says Telescope, "but he'll never live to collect. I bought five thousand sheep from 'Alcohol' Adams, a autymobile from Art Miller and some cows from Johnny Myers."

"I bought cows from Hank Padden," enumerated Muley. "I bought Abe Mudgetts' house and I bought ——"

"Gents," says Chuck, sad-like, "we own everything in the county except a cook-stove and three joints of pipe."

"And they'll come to collect tomorrow," wails Muley.

"Aw, what do we care?" whispers Telescope. "Slim's sins will be on his own head, and his head won't mind a little sin after I get through with it. We'll investigate McGuire's first. Come on."

WE SAMPLED the silver lining again and then started out for McGuire's, traveling like Injuns but each following his own single file.

"Betcha he's there," says Telescope as we collects around the front steps.

The house is lit up, and we can hear somebody picking on the mandolin.

"I've brought my rope," says Chuck. "When he comes to the door I'll dob this loop over his head and then we'll go hither. Slim would argue and argue and we ain't got no time for that."

"Tha's clever," applauds Muley. "Lemme get on the extreme end of the rope, 'cause that Slim feller can hit like a mule's kick."

Telescope walks up to the door and knocks real hard.

"Slim!" he yelps. "Slim Hawkins!"

I can hear Chuck's rope going *swish, swish,* as he swings his loop, and then the door opens. A man steps out.

"*Swap!*" goes the rope.

"Heave ho!" yells Chuck. "I've got him!"

I made a dive for the rope and got my hands full of dirt, while the congregation seems to use my carcass for a stepping-stone. I got massaged from top-knot to toe-nails with sharp heels, and the last to pass over me seems to kick me to one side, as if I had done my duty and wasn't any further use to humanity.

I crawled over and got hung up in a barb-wire fence, where I left some of my shirt. Then I managed to find the road and pilgrims towards town. I finds the rest of my cohorts on the sidewalk, trying to pump air into Telescope's lungs. I lit a match and looks 'em over and they sure looks like a bunch of scarecrows gone to seed.

"Did you run away?" asks Chuck, hoarse-like.

"Run ——! I crawled. I reckon Slim ——"

"You do, do yuh?" grunts Muley. "This is a —— of a time to reckon anything."

Just then Telescope sets up and makes noises.

"Ch-Chuck," he wheezes, "you—you hah-had your lul-loop too big."

"Where's Slim's re-mains?" I asks.

"My ——, you must 'a' been away for a while," grunts Muley. "We-uh— Chuck caught Telescope and Oreana in the same loop."

"Was Oreana mad?" I asks.

"Well," says Muley, "if he wasn't, Henry,

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he's got a danged rough idea of good nature."

"I'll bet a dobie dollar that Slim is up at Smith's," says I. "He's likely settin' on the sofy, holdin' Lizzie's hand by this time."

"The danged ungrateful coyote," wails Telescope. "I wish——"

"Why wish?" asks Muley. "This ain't no fairy-tale."

"I was wishin' I had a quick way of gettin' to Piperock, and I've got it. Come on."

We all limps around behind the livery stable, where Telescope lights a match.

"I've got a bill of sale for that automobile," says he.

"You can't run it," objects Muley.

"The —— I can't. Art explained the whole works. Get in."

There wasn't nothing gaudy about that machine. It had a box body, which Art built, and a sort of a seat in front. Art bought it from a sewing-machine agent for forty dollars and a pair of Piegan ceremonial moccasins. We rolls it out to the road, and all got in.

"Yuh have to wind her up," explains Telescope. "Muley, you wind her up, will yuh? Twist that dingus on the front end. Sabe? Give her a lift and a spin."

"I'm a little winder from Windersville," says Muley, and then he commences to make good his threat.

Wowie!

Me and Chuck went over backwards, over the rear of that box and lit on our necks in the road while that danged machine went away up the road like a flock of cannons.

"He—he went away and left us," gasps Chuck.

"Thank ——!" gasps Muley's voice and we sees him set up in the road.

"Did he leave you, too, Muley?" I asks.

"I—I hope so, Henry. I think he left some of me, anyway. Did he run over you fellers, too?"

"He'll get killed," groans Chuck. "Let's get our broncs and trail along to pick up the remains."

"It's a labor of love," says I, "and I hope we'll find enough to make the trip worth while."

We got on our broncs and fogs out of town towards Piperock. I'm so sore that I has to set sideways in the saddle, and I'm riding a Bar-20 roan outlaw, which gallops with stiff knees. We hits the narrow grade along Wind River, where the road ain't wide enough for two rigs to pass, and where it's fifty feet straight down into the river, when all to once there comes a roar behind us.

"What in —— is that?" yells Chuck.

"Autymobile!" yelps Muley. "Ride like —— or twang a harp."

I know that Bar-20 roan can run but that automobile made us look like we was going uphill with hopples on. I hears somebody yell behind me, and then that roaring monster crowds between me and salvation. I feels myself go into space and then I throws myself backwards off the saddle, praying to every known god, idol or totem that I lands fair.

I lit on my head and shoulders in that automobile body, and I gets a series of vibrations up and down my spine that would shake the bark off a green tree. Comes a awful crash, a swapping of ends, and then I slept.

I DON'T know how long I slept but when I woke up I finds myself still in the machine with my feet in the air. I'm a dead loss as far as feelings goes, and when I tried to turn over I hears Telescope's voice wailing:

"Can'tcha lay still? For gosh sake don't shake it!"

"Shake what?" I asks.

"This cursed gas-galloper. I think we're hangin' by the skin of our teeth, and if you shake it loose we'll fall into Wind River."

"How in —— did you ever get behind us?" I asks.

"I missed the road, Henry, and had to circle around to pick it up."

"You likely killed Chuck and Muley."

"Well," says he, cheerful-like, "two out of three ain't a bad average. Don't shake! My gosh, don't shake. I tell yuh we're just hangin', tha's all. We went over the edge and hung up on a tree, right where she breaks sharp into the cañon. Go easy; get here with me, and we'll jump together."

According to geography we're on the west side of the river, and according to Telescope's theory we're about to let loose and fall a mile. Jumping west will save us. Fine. Never again do I let any half-witted puncher be a compass to me. We jumped.

After I fell about fifty feet I began to wonder how that machine ever got up in that tree. Then I hit feet first in the silt slope of the cañon, turned over in the air and dried up about fifty feet of Wind River when I landed. I felt myself hit the water, go down to the mud, and then I skidded out to where it ain't knee-deep, with my ears, eyes, nose, mouth and clothes full of alkali mud.

I sets there in the water, trying to remember something of my recent past, when I hears a very liquid and very sad voice, crying in the wilderness:

"Oh-h-h, Henry Peck! Hen-ree-e-e!"

"Telescope," says I, "you've got a —— of a sense of direction."

"Did you fall all the way, Henry?"

"No, I touched once but I didn't stay."

"I jumped up-hill," says he. "I sure did, Henry."

"Well, you didn't go up, that's a cinch."

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The morning sun has greeted us long before we manages to get back to that grade. I found my bronc, half-way down the hill, with the saddle under its belly and its rump braced against a tree.

We managed to get the roan back to the grade, and then we finds Muley and Chuck setting on the bank with their broncs tied to a tree, and just beyond them is that cursed automobile, still on the grade. It must 'a' turned half-way around and tried to climb a tree on the outside edge of the grade, 'cause there she stands, reared up against that tree, and the whole front end of her is smashed.

"I jumped up-hill," mumbles Telescope, "but never again do I figure directions by up-hill or down-hill."

"Well," says Muley, "if you *hombres* are through pesticating around down there we'll go home. I hope you found all the little fish at home."

"They was," says I, "but there's two suckers missing now."

It's almost noon when we drifts in sight of the Cross J.

"Looks like a auction sale," grunts Telescope as our eyes behold the conglomeration of horses and vehicles. As we rides up they comes out to greet us. There's Mike Pelly, Hank Padden, Abe Mudgett, Zeb Abernathy, Johnny Myers, Wick Smith, Art Miller and "Old Testament" Tilton. They gathers around us, and then Abe Mudgett says—

"We're just wonderin' if we've been lied unto."

"In what manner of means?" asks Muley.

"I don't give a dang," says Alcohol. "All I wants is the money for my sheep."

"I has been told," states Hank Padden, "that Slim has to only invest ten thousand, but after lookin' into things we finds that he's bought about thirty thousand dollars' worth, which causeth a deficiency somewhere."

"Also some casualties," grins Art. "I sold my gas go-devil, and it ain't got no brake."

"What about them nuptiels?" asks Testament. "I hears rumors of marriage and the holy bonds of wedlock, and I am here for such a emergency."

Just then we sees Slim and Jay Bird riding in across the hills, driving a couple of cows and calves. They rides up and looks us over.

"Somebody dead?" asks Jay Bird.

"Not yet," says Abe Mudgett, "but there's hopes."

"Well, Slim," says Wick, "we're here to do business. Do I get the money?"

"Hold on, Wick," says Mike. "I'll talk to Slim about that saloon deal."

"And my cows," adds Hank Padden, mean-like.

"Wait a minute," cautions Alcohol Adams. "I don't want to quarrel with anybody, but my sheep comes first."

"Sheep ——!" snaps Abe Mudgett. "That house of mine——"

Slim shakes his head, slow-like, and wets his lips.

"You ain't married yet, are you, Slim?" asks Muley.

Slim wets his lips again and shakes his head.

"Is it all off if you don't get married?" asks Wick.

Slim swallers hard and wipes his eyes.

"Don't feel bad about it," advises Zeb. "It's your own fault, Slim. I told you that I'd do all I could by talkin' to Susie, but you——"

"You never accepted Lizzie's invite," chides Wick.

"I don't give a dang about love," says Abe. "All I want——"

SLIM jabs his bronc with his heels and jumps out of the crowd, then turns and faces the crowd with a gun in each hand.

"Now, hold fast!" he whispers, hoarse-like. "I may be just as crazy as they make 'em, but I'm goin' to get an even break or kill somebody. Muley, you do the talkin', will yuh? Every danged family in the county is tryin' to make love to me, and I don't like it. Sabe? Now, talk!"

"It ain't no sufferin' secret!" snaps Muley. "You danged ungrateful coyote, you. We all turned in to help yuh, and yuh bit the hand that fed yuh."

"Help me?" gasps Slim. "Go on and tell about it."

"Well," chokes Muley, "you had to invest that danged ten thousand before the first of the month, and you had to get married, and——"

"Oh!" grunts Slim, foolish-like. "Oh, I—see-e-e."

"We're glad you can," says Chuck. "We've sure helped you more than anybody else would have, Slim Hawkins."

Slim scratches his head for a moment, squints his eyes, and then doubles over his saddle-horn, with tears running down his nose.

"Did you lie to us?" yowls Telescope.

"No-o-o-o!" howls Slim. "Oh, mamma, mamma, mamma mine! Haw! Haw! Haw!

"I remember now. You—you danged fools bothered me, and wanted to know why I looked so sad. Haw! Haw! Haw!"

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" mimics Muley. "What's the joke, feller?"

"Get that magazine!" weeps Slim. "It's a story in it, you—— fools! That hero's troubles made me look sad. He got in a awful mess."

We watched that sour-balled bunch drift away, tearing up their bills of sale, and then Slim says, sort of choking-like—

"Like to have me read that story to yuh?"

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"Thank you very kindly," says Muley, "but you needn't bother about it. I reckon it all came out right."

"No-o-o," drawls Slim, "it didn't. Yuh see, that investment wasn't—wasn't in the story a-tall. I just put that in. The real plot read that he'd inherit a farm in Kansas if he got married before the first of the month, which he didn't."

"Tha-that's a —— of a plot," stutters Muley. "Why didn't he marry?"

"Well," says Slim, sort of sad-like, "there was only three girls to pick from, and two of 'em had steady fellers, and the other was—Say, who in —— wants to eat *frijoles* three times per day and live on a Kansas farm?"

Slim walks away and leaves the four of us setting there on the bunk-house steps, looking at each other. After while Muley stumbles inside and finds that magazine. We takes turns looking through it, and then we sets down and looks at each other. Then Muley says—

"He's either a awful —— liar or a square shooter, boys."

"His morals don't bother me as long as he hates *frijoles*," states Chuck.

From out by the corral comes Slim's voice, sad and low—

"For I'm a po-o-o-o-r cowboy and I know I've done wrong."

"Use your own judgment, cowboy," says Telescope. "You know more about Kansas and your sense of taste than we do," and Hawkins' four little helpers went to bed—contented.

Magic

BY R. T. M. Scott

Author of "Such Bluff as Dreams Are Made Of," etc.

IN THE garden of the Galle Face Hotel at Colombo in the island of Ceylon a native conjurer squatted upon the ground amid his bags and baskets of tricks—if tricks they are. He was from the North of India, he claimed, and his flowing dress was grimed with many a mile of travel. His lips were red with betel-nut and his eyes were piercing black as he glanced from underneath his turban at the gathering throng of people upon the hotel veranda before him.

It was boat-day in Colombo; a great liner, en route from Australia to England had disgorged its passengers for twenty-four hours on shore. They flitted about the city in rickshaw and *gharri* or threaded their way on foot into the *ghee*-smelling native bazaars. When they were tired or too hot they sought the big hotels and sat at little tables in the gardens or upon the verandas while barefooted Singalese boys with long black hair drawn back by tortoise-shell combs brought long iced drinks.

These were the people from whom the native conjurer and juggler hoped to obtain the greatest reward. True, his audience was not composed wholly of tourists. Here and there was a planter from up-country and an occasional harbor official or commercial man of the town sauntered over and edged his way into the crowd to see again the old tricks he had seen so often.

While the audience was still increasing the native uncovered a flat wicker basket and blew a few shrill notes on a wooden whistle with stops for his fingers. As the notes sounded two cobras lifted their hooded heads from out the basket and swayed from side to side with darting tongues. Carefully the native seized them from behind and held them out at arm's length.

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"*Sahib!* One bite—snake kill!" he exclaimed and dropped the reptiles into the basket, where they proceeded to coil themselves up.

"Very ordinary work," commented a big man in white flannels. "The snakes have probably been rendered harmless," he continued for the benefit of the crowd while pointing with his cane at the basket. "You can see it done at the side-show of any circus."

Some of the spectators seemed to agree with the critic while a few mildly resented his interference. Most of them, however, were too expectant of what was next to happen to pay him any attention.

Two men in rear of the crowd walked back a short distance and stood talking out of earshot. One was an English police sergeant, very smart in his white duck uniform. The other man was tall and lanky and might almost have been a boy except that the look in his blue gray eyes was too mature.

"That's him, sir," said the sergeant, indicating the big man. "Been here a month and has fleeced every man in Colombo who touches a card. Young Mr. Carrington put him up at the club when he first arrived and now he's ruined. Tried to shoot himself last night. That's him, sir, beefin' about the snakes."

"How do you know he is crooked?" asked the tall man.

"We can't get anything on him, sir," replied the sergeant, "but Mr. Carrington said that he offered to pay him back half his losses and give him ten per cent. of future winnings if he would take him up to Kandy and introduce him. Of course no gentleman would make such a proposition as that, sir."

"And he is sailing tomorrow?"

"Yes, sir," continued the sergeant. "You've only got twenty-four hours. How you do these things I don't know, sir. I certainly don't see how you can do this trick before the boat sails. Do you think it's possible, Mr. Smith?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "Perhaps."

While this conversation was going on the native conjurer had risen to his feet and proceeded to balance a twelve-foot bamboo pole upon his projecting chin. Close to the top of the pole were half a dozen small cross-pieces which projected three or four inches.

The native took a small ball, not much larger than a pea, from the folds of his huge sleeve and threw it into the air. The first time he missed but the second time the tiny ball lodged and remained upon the top of the pole. With a cant of his chin he dislodged the ball again and caught it in his hand. This he repeated several times while the crowd watched curiously a feat that was difficult but in no ways startling.

The big man with the cane had engineered himself into a chair at a small table near the railing and was paying more attention to an iced drink than to the juggling.

The conjurer dropped the ball and drew out his wooden whistle, at the same time overturning a small box with his foot. He blew a few warbly notes and from the overturned box six tiny birds flew upward and perched upon the cross-pieces attached to the long bamboo pole where they remained silent and almost motionless.

The native altered the notes which he blew and the birds burst into song. He repeated the first notes and the birds once more became silent. At a single note from the whistle one bird flew away and disappeared into some bushes. One by one he sent the remainder away. He made them sing among the bushes or be silent as he wished. Finally he called them all back together and, dropped the pole, received them on his head where they nestled in his turban.

The performance with the birds brought much applause, the tourists throwing *bakshish* in the form of rupees and some of the residents going so far as to toss away a little copper money. The tall and lanky man flung some money to the native and, bringing back his arm after the throw, swept away the iced drink of the big man with the cane. The glass fell with a crash to the floor.

"I am so sorry," said the tall man and, raising his voice, he called—

"Boy!"

Almost instantly a native servant stood before him. The boy was not one of the Singalese hotel servants. He was a Hindu of extremely impressive appearance. The size of his *puggaree* was tremendous and every inch of his clothing was snow white.

"Was it whisky and soda that you were drinking?" the tall man asked.

"Yes," replied the big man, "but don't bother about ordering another."

"*Aik hota peg aur aik* lemon squash *lao*," directed the tall man to the boy and then, turning to the big man, he continued:

"I have ordered a drink for myself also. Do you mind if I sit at your table and watch the man of magic? My name is Smith."

"Not at all," was the reply. "I'm glad to have you. My name is Higgins from Australia. Ever been there?"

"No," replied Smith. "Have to work too hard to travel much."

"Tea planting?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "Just got in an hour ago for a holiday after three months of hard work up-country."

"Rather an ordinary show that this fellow is giving us," said Higgins, jerking his head toward the native conjurer.

"Some are better than others," returned Smith.

"The whole bag of tricks is nothing but sleight of hand," said Higgins rather heatedly.

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"You don't think that there is really such a thing as magic, do you?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "Sometimes there is but not always."

"Then why do they ever bother with slight of hand?" asked Higgins.

"Easier," replied Smith. "Watch this one that he is doing now. It is the mango-tree trick—one of the great feats of India."

On a bit of bare ground in front of him the native conjurer had scraped with his hands a small mound of loose earth and dust. From a bag he produced a flat-shaped stone or seed of the mango fruit. This he held up for all to see and then pressed it down into the center of the little mound of earth.

"Mango-tree grow quick," he said, looking up at the veranda.

From a small bottle he proceeded to sprinkle the buried seed with what appeared to be water. He then covered the mound with a cloth and drew diagrams in the air above the cloth. This finished he rocked himself to and fro while chanting some weird Oriental *mantra*.

The tourists on the veranda leaned over the railing with great attention. To most of them it was something utterly new, something they had read about and doubted.

THE native raised the cloth several inches but without exposing the mound of earth. All the time he continued the chanting of the *mantra* and rocked his body with rhythmic motions. In a few minutes he ceased and lifted away the cloth. From the apex of the little mound was sprouting a green leaf, a mango leaf. To make his work still more convincing the native dug up the mango seed and held it out so that all could see that the leaf was really growing from the seed.

Amid the applause from the spectators Higgins pointed his cane disparagingly at the conjurer.

"Sleight of hand," he said. "Nothing but sleight of hand. I could do it myself."

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "He may have done it that way but the trick isn't finished."

The native sprinkled a few more drops on the mound and again covered it with the cloth. He made passes over the cloth with a small stick or wand and chanted his *mantra* with greater energy. Finally, with his bare hand and arm, he placed his wand under the cloth and proceeded to raise it upward until the cloth hung from his up-ended stick as a bell-tent hangs from a center pole. Slowly he continued to raise the cloth on the end of his wand until he revealed the stem, tiny branches and leaves of a complete mango tree which issued from the top of the mound.

Amid a shower of *bakshish* from the tourists the native conjurer stood up and salaamed.

Higgins, however, was not satisfied.

"Nothing but sleight of hand," he exclaimed in a loud voice. "The little tree was inside your hollow wand," he called to the conjurer.

"*Sahib* know all tricks?" asked the native, addressing his doubter.

The drinks arriving at this moment, Higgins turned his back on the conjurer and applied himself to a straw while Smith sat idly and appeared to pay no attention to anything or anybody.

Meanwhile the conjuring native, glancing every now and then at Higgins' broad back, had taken three half coconut shells from a bag. The shells were painted differently to distinguish them. One was red, one was white and one was blue. Under the red shell the conjurer slipped a walnut and then lifted the same red shell to show that the walnut had vanished. Next he lifted the white shell and the walnut appeared.

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed Higgins, suddenly noticing what was going on. "A trick out of the white man's ark!"

"*Sahib* know this trick?" asked the native ingratiatingly.

"I certainly do," replied Higgins with emphasis.

With apparent carelessness the native let the walnut roll under the red coconut shell so that all could see.

"*Sahib* make bet?" asked the conjurer. "Which color *sahib* bet on?"

Higgins got up from his chair and limped down the steps of the veranda with the aid of his cane.

"I know this trick inside out," he said arrogantly. "The walnut," he explained to the spectators, "is not under any one of the shells."

"*Sahib*," interposed the native, "one walnut is under one shell. *Sahib* make bet and choose?"

"I will bet ten rupees that the walnut is not under either the blue shell or the white shell," said Higgins.

"*Nahin, Sahib*," objected the native. "*Sahib* choose one shell."

"I will bet one hundred rupees to ten rupees," persisted Higgins, smiling, "that the walnut is not under either the blue shell or the white shell."

"*Sahib* look?" asked the conjurer, and immediately began to pack up his things.

Higgins looked surprized but at once tipped over the blue shell with his cane. There was nothing under it. He tipped over the white shell and the walnut lay exposed.

There was a shout of laughter from the veranda.

"Pay up!" voices shouted. "Pay the hundred rupees."

"Just a minute," exclaimed Higgins. "There are two walnuts in this layout."

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He tipped over the red coconut shell. There was nothing under it. Without a word Higgins counted out some notes, threw them on the ground and returned to his table.

"Good magic?" asked Smith.

"Magic nothing!" returned Higgins. "Good sleight of hand."

"Anything on tonight?" asked Smith.

"No; sailing tomorrow."

"Play you a game of snookers after dinner."

"I will be glad to play," said Higgins, looking interested.

Smith put up his hand and his boy presented the *chit* for the drinks.

Smith signed it and, without another word, got up and strolled away.

SMITH dined late that night. Toward the end of dinner his boy, who stood behind his chair and took the dishes from the hotel servants, spoke low for his master's ear only.

"*Sahib*," he murmured, "the cue boy in billiard room sends word by hall boy to dining-room boy that Higgins sahib has engaged billiard-table for ten o'clock."

"What is Higgins sahib doing now?" asked Smith.

"*Sahib*," replied the servant with great gravity, "five minutes ago Higgins sahib scratch head long time before mirror in bedroom and then put clean collar."

The servant paused to take a dish of chicken pilau from a hotel boy and to present it to his master as if he were making an offering to royalty.

"Higgins sahib's boy," he continued, "cleans boots in bathroom and sees through crack in door."

"Is everything ready for tonight?" asked Smith.

"*Sahib*, all is ready."

"You have told everything to Mahmat Gungu, the fortune-teller?"

"Everything, *sahib*."

"Is Mahmat Gungu satisfied?"

"*Sahib*, the soul of Mahmat Gungu is the soul of an owl. For half the *bakshish* he would eat pig."

"When the first game of billiards is finished you will do as I have told you."

"The *sahib's* orders shall be obeyed."

The billiard-room of the Galle Face Hotel was well crowded at ten o'clock when Smith entered. Under the whirring *punkas* men played in their shirt-sleeves and sipped iced drinks on benches against the wall between shots. Except for two English police sergeants who played at a table near the door the players were tourists or planters on a holiday.

Next to the police sergeants' table a big man was limping around a table with a cue in one hand and a cane in the other. He was exceedingly lame and used his cane for every step that he moved. When he leaned over the table to take a shot he would hook his cane into the side pocket of his dinner-jacket. He was alone and seemed to be practising a few shots while waiting for some one to arrive.

The big man glanced up and beckoned as Smith approached.

"Evening, Smith," he said. "Ready?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith, taking off his coat. "What will we play for, Higgins?"

"What you like," returned Higgins. "The sky is my limit."

"Rupee a ball straight?"

"Better than nothing," commented Higgins, shrugging his shoulders. "I'll leave my coat on at that figure. Go ahead and shoot."

"Sorry I'm not a millionaire," returned Smith, and the game commenced.

The game was not an exciting one. Higgins was plainly uninterested on account of the low stakes and Smith was barely civil in his lack of attention. It was not until half the balls were sunk that Smith began to develop his strategy.

"I never bet much on another fellow's game," he said. "Now if this were cards I might make it interesting for you. Care for cards?"

Higgins dropped the butt of his cue upon the floor with a thump and limped over to Smith with a look of interest.

"You've said something!" he exclaimed. "I'm bored to death with this game."

"I'm fed up on it myself," returned Smith. "What say if I sent a *chit* to a couple of pals at the other hotel who came down on the same train with me? They should have a couple of thousand each to play with."

"That suits me," said Higgins.

Smith scribbled a note on a wine check which he qtook from a passing bar-boy. He had scarcely finished and folded it when his own personal servant padded silently to his side.

"Take this note to Stewart sahib at the Grand Oriental Hotel," directed Smith.

The boy took the note, salaamed and made for the door. On his way he stopped for a moment beside a native marker and pretended to pick something totally imaginary from the hem of his immaculate white coat.

"Thou swine," he snarled in Tamil, "thou wert nearly late in warning me that the great one, my master, required a messenger. Thou shalt get no more *bakshish* until thou dost better."

Outside the door of the billiard-room Smith's boy swiftly unfolded the note and read:

Tell Mahmat Gungu and the English police sergeant that Higgins sahib carries gun in left breast pocket.

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The latter half of the game of snookers between Smith and Higgins was more interesting. The prospective game of cards seemed to brighten the situation greatly. Both men became more talkative.

"That's a remarkable servant of yours," said Higgins. "How on earth did he know you were going to write a note a few minutes ago? He must watch every move you make."

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "He's a good boy."

"I wish I could get my boy to watch me a little more," went on Higgins. "He's never around when I want him."

"A fortune-teller once told me," said Smith, "that my boy would some day save my life."

Higgins pocketed the next to last ball and missed the last one.

"You don't really believe that there is anything in fortune-telling, do you?" asked Higgins.

Smith found the tip of his cue to be loose and stopped to talk before selecting another cue from the rack.

"Nearly all the native fortune-tellers around here have considerable genuine power," he said. "Have you tried any of them?"

"No," replied Higgins. "I have always believed that the art of fortune-telling lies in ambiguous statements. It would take a lot to make me believe. I am a skeptic about all forms of magic."

"I have heard skeptics talk before," said Smith. "They make the firmest believers. I have lived too long in this country not to know what I am talking about. If you will stay over until the next boat I will lay you one thousand rupees that I can convince you and you can be your own judge."

"I would like to take your bet," Higgins tapped the floor with his cane as if not quite decided, "but I am afraid I must sail tomorrow."

"As you like," said Smith indifferently, selecting a new cue. "We are even now. This is the last ball and it decides the game."

It was a difficult shot. Smith swung his cue gently with perhaps more care than he had been using and the cue ball drove the object ball slowly toward the pocket. At the very edge of the pocket it balanced for a second and then dropped in with a click.

AS THE ball fell into the pocket a native attendant carelessly allowed a cue to slip through his fingers and crash on the floor. Immediately pandemonium seemed to break loose in the hall outside the billiard-room door. Shouts, cries, screams and invectives literally hurled themselves through the air and all in the native tongues. Singalese, Tamil, Burmese and Hindustani mingled in fierce protest, indignant explanation and spiteful cursing.

In the midst of this tumult of words there surged through the billiard-room door a struggling mass of a dozen natives totally oblivious in their excitement to the fact that they were in the presence of white men. All billiard playing stopped at once and the players stood in surprize watching the mêlée.

Suddenly one of the police sergeants stepped forward.

"*Chup raol*" he roared which is a command for silence.

Instantly the struggling ceased and the vituperation subsided while the excited natives fell back before the white exponent of English law. From out their midst was revealed an old man who seemed to have been their victim and the cause of all the trouble.

"What's all this *tamasha?*" demanded the police sergeant.

"Master," whined a Singalese rickshaw coolie, "this very bad man. He not pay for rickshaw."

"*Burra sahib,*" countered the old native and with Hindu cunning trying to flatter the police sergeant by calling him a great *sahib*, "I give half-rupee for rickshaw from bazaar. Not worth more; not got rubber tires."

"Who are you?" questioned the sergeant.

"*Burra sahib,*" said the old man, "I am Mahmat Gungu, the fortune-teller. For seven years I live and not speak in Himalayas and live on nuts and roots. I talk to animals and know past, present and future."

"I know him," whispered Smith to Higgins. "He was in Kandy last month. He is very good."

"Stake your thousand rupees on him?" asked Higgins.

"Even money?" falteringly from Smith.

"Even money."

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "You're on."

Smith stepped forward and interrupted the police sergeant, who was commencing to question the rickshaw coolie.

"Officer," he said, "this is just a slight misunderstanding among the natives and I think I can settle it."

He threw a handful of small change into the hall and the natives rushed wildly to pick it up.

"Meanwhile my friend wants his fortune told if Mahmat Gungu will oblige."

"Excellency," said Mahmat Gungu, "I am your servant."

The police sergeant smiled and went back to his game while Smith led the old native fortune-teller away.

At one side of the billiard-room was an empty bench and upon this Higgins and Smith sat while the fortune-teller squatted on the floor at their feet. He was a frail old figure, the fortune-teller, in his flimsy clothes which were little better than a bundle of rags. Higgins

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looked down contemptuously and seemed to feel the contrast made by his well-fed bulk.

Several men stopped playing and gathered in rear of the fortune-teller at a little distance. Some one had overheard the thousand rupee wager and the decision of such a wager is interesting.

"Want to see the bet decided?" asked Higgins and, seeming to like an audience, he beckoned with his hand.

"Gather around, gentlemen. I have bet my friend a thousand rupees that this fortune-teller doesn't know a thing about my past or future and—little about my present."

The old fortune-teller looked up with cunning eyes at Higgins.

"*Sahib* forty-six years old," he said.

"Correct," commented Higgins, "but lots of people are good on ages. That proves nothing."

"*Sahib* not love women," went on the native. "Women love *sahib* for money."

Higgins merely smiled.

"*Sahib* give something to hold in hand?"

Higgins looked puzzled.

"He means something that you carry about with you," interposed Smith, "something that he can psychometrize. Your cane will do."

Higgins, very condescendingly, handed down his handkerchief.

"Too fresh from wash," said the native. "*Vhobi wallah* take truth from handkerchief with soap and water. *Sahib* give cane?"

Higgins looked slightly annoyed but took back the handkerchief and tendered a gold cigaret case.

Mahmat Gungu appeared satisfied with the cigaret case, which he placed against his forehead and remained motionless for a short time with his eyes closed. Meanwhile more and more players had given up their game as the news of the big bet had spread. They formed a massed semicircle in front of the bench.

"I see *sahib's* body," began the native in a quavering voice, "very white, fresh like flower. One mole behind back—think under left shoulder. *Sahib* scratch mole every night, every morning."

There was a slight titter from the spectators but Higgins was silent and his face mask-like—a good poker face.

"*Sahib* sick very funny," continued Mahmat Gungu, taking the cigaret case from his forehead and pressing it against his breast. "Sometimes sick, sometimes well. *Sahib* never see doctor about leg."

"All rubbish!" exclaimed Higgins in a disgusted tone. "Any use continuing this farce, Smith?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith indifferently; "might as well."

"Mahmat Gungu see everything," continued the native. "Higgins sahib very lame man all time but when in bathroom. Higgins sahib go take bath, Higgins sahib not lame soon bathroom door closed."

"Rubbish!" reiterated Higgins with emphasis, but he shifted a little uneasily and his eye glanced in a calculating way at the semicircle of faces opposite.

"All wrong so far?" asked Smith.

"All wrong except my age," sneered Higgins, "and that doesn't count. The thing is ridiculous."

"*Sahib* not like to hear truth," remonstrated the native. "Mahmat Gungu only tell truth. Mahmat Gungu see Higgins sahib play much cards; make much money. *Sahib* play cards all time, sometimes with other *sahibs*, sometimes alone. *Sahib* very funny when alone. Play with walking-stick. Put stick between knees and deal over handle. All time look hard at handle. *Sahib's* stick magic stick; make good luck."

SOME of the spectators were beginning to look inquiringly at one another. Those of them who had had experience with native fortune-tellers knew that they were not listening to the usual line of patter that goes with the profession.

"I've had enough of this silly twaddle," said Higgins, turning to Smith. "Let's call the bet off. It isn't fair to you to go on."

"Higgins sahib carry gun inside breast pocket," continued Mahmat Gungu before Smith could reply.

While the onlookers pressed forward in keen interest Smith calmly slapped Higgins' dinner-jacket at about the position of the inside pocket.

"Something hard there," he said. "What is it?"

"He's right this time," returned Higgins sullenly after a fleeting hesitation. "I carry a small one. You never can tell what these natives will do."

"Let's have a look at the stick," said Smith. "He may be right about the stick too."

"Do you want to insult me?" demanded Higgins savagely.

"I have a thousand rupees at stake," persisted Smith very calmly. "Let's see the stick."

"Do you take me for a card-sharp?" roared Higgins, glaring at the lanky length of Smith sprawling on the seat beside him.

"Uh-huh," said Smith, "if you don't hand over the stick."

A light seemed to break upon Higgins. He shifted his big body around and looked searchingly at his long-legged companion.

"Who are you?" he asked in a cold, hard voice.

"Criminal Intelligence Department," Smith replied very calmly.

The huge body of Higgins seemed to catapult through the air as the spectators scattered to right and left and old Mahmat Gungu scuttled

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to one side, a grin of satisfaction upon his wily face. Only Smith remained unmoved. He held in his hand the disputed cane which he had twitched from the hand of Higgins while in the very act of leaping.

It was only a few minutes later that two English police sergeants led back the huge Higgins, now snarling and handcuffed.

Smith held up the cane.

"Notice the silver ring on the handle," he said. "It turns. At one angle it exposes innocent initials. Move it so and it exposes a highly polished mirror which can easily be shielded while cards are dealt over it and their values noted by the dealer. A pretty trick."

"Trick nothing!" exclaimed a spectator. "It's swindling! May I ask how you discovered it?"

"Uh-huh," said Smith. "Ask Mahmat Gungu. It's magic."

But Mahmat Gungu had disappeared.

VENGEANCE

by Clarence Parker

IF TOM WEATHERS ever had any real friends, they were not among the Navajo. For some reason under the surface they didn't care for him. Whether he irritated them by pretending to know them like books, or else understood them too well for their peace of mind; or whether it was because he kept a tight curb and the whip hand in his dealings with them, or maybe on account of something still back of these things, I always felt that they were secretly afraid of him.

Not that I've ever claimed to understand these redskins, or ever will; but I've been watching 'em come and go for more than thirty years. The Navajo may be peaceable, but there's not a cowardly bone in his body—I'll say that in spite of all that's happened—and when he fidgets under a white man's eye, why, it's noticeable.

Among themselves they called him "Moquina-sch," which means, probably, "Dead-man-in-the-dark," or "Dead-man-in-the-sand." I'm not good at their lingo. They put Navajo names to all the people they know. But they were particular not to let him hear them call him anything but "Stahweddahs," which is as near as their tongues can come to "Mr. Weathers."

I never knew much about his past. 'Most everything's either present or to come, this side of the Mississippi, and Weathers was not a man to invite promiscuous questions. He'd had a hard life, like most of us, and I've thought likely a sad one.

Soon after he came to this town, about the time we went into business together, he told me the only thing he ever did tell me about his previous life; only two or three sentences at that. It was about his brother, younger than he.

Seems the two of them came out West to make their fortunes and after several starvation years got their first good money taking curios out of those old cliff-dweller houses that are plastered up and down the cañons from here to Mexico. They'd dynamite the rookeries to let in light and kill the rattlers, then pack out all the pottery, along with other salable stuff, that wasn't smashed. Most of it got smashed, but what was left would have soon made them rich.

It was a wasteful proceeding. And if the savages had known about it, it would have annoyed them devilishly, because they consider those old Aztec homesteads kind of sacred. Their ancestors lived in them. A —— of a long time ago it must have been, but that's what old

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Qua-Hatch once told me when he was on speaking terms with Weathers and me.

Two very wise men from Washington were in through here a year or two ago and said there was nothing in Qua-Hatch's yarn, but I don't know—the redskins did have ancestors, that's certain, and the poor ginks had to live somewhere. Every few seasons I get to hear of curious doings off in some of these cañons north and west of here, where a good many mummies have been found hidden away in dark chambers or covered under fallen walls.

Now and then a big celebration happens over in there, with a snake-dance in honor of the dead ancestors, whose souls the Indians think have taken up quarters in the bodies of the rattle-snakes that infest lots of those ruins—especially some big ones that either have had extra good chances for growth or are a special breed.

They have a way, these Navajos, of capturing the snakes whenever they want to with a sort of snare—a horse-hair loop at the end of a stick. When they are ready to use them in the ritual of their Ancient Order of D. T. Hounds, they feed the creatures heavily and then stupefy them with tobacco smoke, after which they can be handled for an hour or so without much danger.

The notion that the fangs have been drawn before a brave jumps through the fire with a rattler between his teeth or wears it as a necklace is all off; you could not pay these Indians to hurt one of the brutes.

According to their way of looking at it, the only respectful way to kill one is to cut off the head, which must then be buried in a deep hole. And that only happens when somebody has been bitten.

But I was talking about the brother. He and Weathers, with their wholesale looting of the cliff-houses, were close to a clean-up; but before they'd quite made it this younger brother fell into a crevice or something and got killed. After that it seems Weathers went off his head a bit, and wandered away. Stayed several years, but I don't know anything about that.

I do know, though, that when he rambled back this way and we fell in together, his knowledge of curio-values helped us through many a tight squeeze. He's often had the far end of that old 'dobe warehouse filled with enough pots and bones and red-headed mummies to salt a first-rate Indian graveyard.

The Navajo think if you like to fool around such junk you're bad medicine, or in other words in cahoots with evil spirits. Still, I don't think that had much to do with their antipathy for him, because I noticed it—fear, or whatever it was—when he first turned up here.

The whole time I knew Weathers, he never once so much as spoke the word home. He never said anything about going back wherever he came from, like 'most any one would, to enjoy the scenes of his childhood, and so forth. For that matter, he seemed to have forgotten how to enjoy anything—to have practically lost the idea of joy. He seldom smiled, and I never knew him to laugh—a straight-out, honest laugh—but once.

But I was not curious. It doesn't pay to be, out here.

One day, though, a little picture, no larger than my thumb-nail, dropped out of his watch. He hadn't noticed, and as I picked it up to hand to him I couldn't help seeing written across the back, "To Brocky." Somehow, without really thinking what I was about, I turned it over. It was the photograph of a young woman, the kind men go to hell for, with worlds of worthwhileness under the beauty.

Then—last week—we found among his effects some letters addressed to Thomas Wutherall; inside, they started off. "Dear Brocky." It was this reminded me of the picture that fell from the watch.

Well, false fronts are no novelty in this corner of the Vineyard. Twenty years ago even the buildings had 'em! So, whether it was really Weathers or Wutherall would never have lost me any sleep. But when I saw that those letters were signed "Your devoted wife, Clarita"—when I saw that, I tell you I was glad I had never seen it before that day. Before I finish, you'll say so, too.

Three other letters in the same hand were signed "Sincerely, Clarita," and addressed to Alfred Wutherall—that would be the brother—begging for news of Thomas, and asking him—Thomas—to write, for God's sake, if still alive.

I'm no saint. But, by all that's holy, I'd never have stood the man's company if I'd known those unanswered letters were lying all those years there in his dispatch box in the safe.

But I didn't know, so he and I did business with the Navajo from 1896 right on, prospering, too, most of the time, until about two years ago, when we had a difference with the three sons of old Chief Qua-Hatch over their wool account. They thought—or pretended to think—that they were owing us less than our books showed, and flatly refused to pay.

The amount was up in the four figures, and Weathers was pretty harsh in demanding full payment, but they still refused to settle on those terms, and pretty soon we realized that they had taken their business elsewhere. It would have paid us to pocket the loss and say, "Thank you, come again!"

Of course, no one goes to law with an Indian, so we were done. We were more thoroughly done, in fact, than we suspected at once. Old Qua-Hatch had raised the wildest bucks on the Reservation, a trio whose escapades, not always of a Sunday-school variety, were the everlasting envy of less enterprising youths.

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They talked what they held as their grievance from one end of the Agency to the other, and in less than thirty days had started a fad that had caused the withdrawal of four-fifths of our wool accounts, since when most of the rest have followed—about one a week!

We had practically reached the point where "the wicked cease from troubling;" besides us two, there was little or nothing left worth troubling. We both thought we couldn't be much worse off—and a week ago today Tom Weathers was buried!

The Monday before, he looked in here and asked me to go with him to the warehouse for a minute. On the way he said:

"Stimson, you've read after a fellow named Kipling, some, haven't you?"

I admitted it; there's been little or no business, and a man's got to do something.

"Well, he's the bird that's going to hatch out retribution for our friends the Qua-Hatches and at the same time put us hep, so to speak, with the Navajo nation."

"No," I gurgled, "you don't say! Does he use a guaranteed incubator or a tame hen?"

INSTEAD of noticing he began ot hurry on across the plaza, I following. As soon as we were inside the warehouse he fastened the door behind us and led the way back toward the curio room. I had not been in the place for years. From a shelf he took down a glue-pot—he was quite a taxidermist—and stirred the contents, causing it to give off the usual bad news, with something added that reminded me of a sermon I once heard on future punishment.

"Exhibit A," said he, and passed into his museum, crooking a finger for me to follow.

"Exhibit B," he announced, slapping his hand on the heavy door as he closed it, shutting out even the dirty light from the warehouse windows, whereupon glowing smoke surged up from the glue-pot, which moved about like a will-o'-the-wisp in the pitchy darkness.

Suddenly a graveyard face began appearing and vanishing like a stuttering ghost, and my hair stood at attention. Phosphorus effect, of course; but that was the first time I had ever met any of those mummies face to face and wearing the cosmetics of a banshee.

Weathers called out, "Exhibit C," and I asked him if he really didn't know the difference between Kipling and the Witch of Endor. He gave a sound between a sniff and a snort and went right on brightening all those unholy relics in the corners where they were.

The phosphorus livened them up beautifully, so that they seemed to be gathering themselves to spring out, and, besides, a choice grand opera of smells was doing its bit. From the middle of his little hell Weathers spoke up more cheerfully than I had heard him for a long time—

"Pretty good, eh, Stim?"

"Good?" says I. "What for? Man, even at five dollars a look there will never be enough strange tourists through this town to pay the expense of shipping them to the bug-house the next day!"

That seemed to depress him.

"Stim," he said, pleadingly, "you remember the story of Kipling's, don't you, about two poor rotters that got to be kings? Well, that's how we're going to get what's coming to us: in other words, by working on the inborn superstitions of the savage mind."

"Yes," I said as we turned to go out, "I remember how they were kinged to the queen's taste, and a —— sight of other stuff happened, for good measure."

Just as we left the warehouse the three Qua-Hatches rode by, each with a feather in his hair, as solemn and self-possessed as horned owls—the sleek, high-headed rascals!

"Exhibit D," said Weathers in a whisper.

"Just so," I came back, "and we, I suppose, are to be pointed out to wondering visitors as Exhibit E, if enough scraps can be rodeo'd to hang a tag on after we get what's coming to us!"

"Nonsense!" He flipped his hand. "Those chaps are looking for us right now— I sent 'em a mealy-mouthed message of conciliation last week, with a good bait to their vanity wrapped up in it, and here they are! Luck's with us, for once! Leave it to me, and keep your long ears cocked this way. So long!"

I came back to the office.

Just how Weathers tolled his victims to their spiritual Waterloo I don't know, but I saw them on the way. Through this door and the front one, as I was settling down to work here at the desk, I had a glimpse of the three Qua-Hatches stalking after him with a lot of that pomp and circumstance that no sane or sober white man can begin to touch.

No more than three minutes later something entirely new in this section broke loose. It sounded like the women at about six Indian funerals, but as if 'twas a mile or two off. Those quavering wails would start and stop and start again and slide up into screeches and break off short.

I went out in front, and every one else was doing the same, but no one knew which way to look for the noise; that is, the whites didn't know. There was quite a bunch of Indians about, some squatting on the sand, some leaning against posts, some just come out of the stores, but they were all on stand like bird dogs, every one of 'em set or pointed at that warehouse.

The whole thing happened in about the length of time it takes to tell it. The noise had stopped and three dazed red men stumbled out of the warehouse door. One's blanket was

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wound tightly around his head, another had his shirt split down the back, while the last to appear was as little pestered with clothes as the day he was foaled. At the step they got in one another's way and fell in a tangle, but scrambled up and swarmed across the plaza, threw themselves a-sprawl of their ponies and left town in a small cyclone of sand and dust.

In a few minutes Weathers found me in the office fixing to clean my guns. He came in, shut the door, leaned against it and—laughed! My big toe is black and blue where I dropped a Colt's .45 on it. He began talking low and hurriedly between laughs.

"Stim, you ought to 've been behind something—beat any show I've been to in my whole life, and I used to see some corking ones! As I turned those bucks into the corral I wondered how long it'd take 'em to give the recoil. Stim, on my word, I like to not had the door shut when they came against it—nothing but the fact that it opens inwards held it! I heard their breaths whistle out, then in, and they struck it like a snow-slide off of Uncompahgre! When they found it was solid—man, they sure gave tongue."

"I heard them," said I.

"I'll warrant you did! And by jiminy, when I looked through my peep-hole, Stim, I swear I was almost frightened, myself. Those curios can certainly put on a high-grade performance. Old Qua-Hatch's little boys wailed and lamented—you'd have thought they were chief mourners at their own wake—and after a bit I addressed them through the knot-hole, which they probably took for more magic, for they went flat on the floor and crawled and whimpered and scratched at the door like puppies! Stim, Stim—it was rich! Henceforth the susceptibility of the untutored mind is going to be our one best bet!"

All at once he noticed what I was doing.

"Hello—what's this?" he snapped.

I told him I was arranging some odds on that one best bet.

"Aw, don't you worry." He laughed a loud, dry laugh. "We're going to connect with results immediately, believe me! Before I let the blackguards go, I made them promise to pay up every cent and bring back their account into the bargain. Why, Stim, they would have promised me old Qua-Hatch's eyelashes if I had mentioned it!"

"Yes, but what kind of performers are they going to make? Will they do anything?"

"Do anything? Stim, they think their souls are lost if they don't! I told them the *moqui-ga-koosh*—dead-who-shine—in that place were people who at one time or another had displeased or opposed me, but that now they were my slaves, forced to reside in the bodies of those mummies, and that the sons of the great Qua-Hatch should suffer the same fate if they did not agree to my demands. I assured them that if they made me false promises in order to escape, I would send these dead-who-shine after them in the next dark moon, no matter where they might go to hide, to bring their spirits back and change them into other dead-who-shine. It was comical, Stim, comical!"

He actually stopped talking in order to laugh.

"Stim, they fairly raved, they were so eager to obey me. And they not only promised, but swore a sort of Navajo oath by the sacred snake, as well. Our motto hereafter, if we choose, instead of "All treated alike," can be "Don't tread on me!"—and collections will be a simple shake-down! We're safe!"

He wiped the perspiration from his face, jerked his hand at me with an *"Hasta luego!"* and went for his horse. I knew he intended to make the rounds of some old women who were weaving blankets for us, and scarcely looked for him back that day.

After a bit I saw him riding leisurely past the front door.

That was Monday.

TUESDAY I was here at the desk along in the middle of the afternoon trying to tunnel through the granite face to some sort of lead on our future. You've already noticed how the office door and the front store door are directly in line from where I sit. Something made me glance up just in time to see old One-Eyed-Hawk, of the Agency Police, tumbling from the back of a horse that was in the act of keeling over. It was Weathers' horse! I jumped up and ran out, whereupon the Indian grabbed me by the vest and barked, "Stahweddahs! Stahweddahs!" as much as a dozen times before he could get any further.

"What's the matter?" I asked, amazed to see an Indian, particularly this one, in such a stir, and seized the old fellow's elbows to give him a gentle shaking.

That started him pronto.

"Stahweddahs gone—" he stammered. "Dey git um—" he held out three fingers, "Qua-Hatch boys! Yes'day—dey git um—tie um up! Tie on pony! Me try help—no can. Dey go fast. No can help—dey ride all-time keep too much eye open! Pecos Cañon—you git mans—ponies—make one da' hurry-up!'

The crowd around the exhausted horse pricked up their ears at that and scattered, to return within ten minutes with four times their number, all armed, mounted and ready to take the trail.

I've not had a horesman's physique for a good many years: five-feet-eight and two hundred and ninety pounds sure look ridiculous on a cayuse's back. That's why I don't keep a beast. The agent was off somewhere on the Arizona side, but it was no time for measuring out red tape, so One-Eye simply impressed a

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Gover'ment pony apiece for him and me. I picked out the ten men with the leanest, hardiest looking ponies to go with us, and we left the rest milling round out in front there, mad as Gila monsters at being left behind.

I've said Weathers had no friends among the Navajo, but that's only partly correct. He had one—this old scout. Don't ask me what made them friends, for I've no notion; but I know that One-Eye, who is unusually loyal to his friends, even for a Navajo, was true as steel to Weathers.

One-Eye is a distinguished old heathen. Ordinarily he moves about as fast as a claim against the government; but in action, when action's the word, let me tell you he's a goin' concern. Prize sign reader of the whole Southwest, too, I guess—one of the old-time kind that's born now and then, but never can be made.

Often when he's hanging around with nothing to do I see him walking all about with his head down looking to see who's in town that day, what he came for and how long he's going to stay. The ground's his newspaper.

Well, we wasted no time getting under way and plowed north through the sand until about ten that night, when we made rest camp for the sake of the stock. At two we cinched up and by seven or better were heading in for the mouth of the Pecos Cañon. One-Eyed-Hawk had led us as straight in the dark as we could have come by daylight.

Here we slid into a likely looking trail that pointed directly into the cañon. By the sun-dried tracks and other indications I judged we had picked up our game. I lost sight of the trail when we got among the rocks of the cañon proper, but I knew it must still be there: there had been no back-track, and for miles there was no chance for ponies to scale the sides, while if the party had abandoned mounts and climbed out afoot—wild as such a move would seem—we should have come on a plenty of signs.

In the cañon it was hot and steamy and every hand's breadth the sun rose made it hotter. Toward noon the heat was like a furnace. Old Sol was near straight overhead when we reached a point about twelve miles up where One-Eyed-Hawk decided to leave the animals. He had taken charge of the expedition now and we were glad to let him run it. At the same time we wondered if the dismounting meant that we were coming to grips.

But One-Eyed told us nothing—merely beckoned us on. Half a mile beyond there is an abrupt turn in the cañon. It takes that to show you how fast the walls have risen on both sides. One-Eyed-Hawk approached this angle with caution. Believe me, so did we, and when he presently signed us down, down we dropped and got our artillery ready.

I watched him picking his way ahead until my eyes got so tired I had to rub them or go blind, and when I looked again he was gone. By now the sun was directly over us, and —— it, with nothing around us but rocks, red and yellow rocks, rocks with nothing to do but soak in that heat and throw it out again—a man might as well have been a squirrel pie in a Dutch oven!

I crawled from one promising boulder to another, trying the little strips of shade that lay alongside; but we were on the west side of the cañon and those rocks 'd had their east faces to the sun all morning. The sun had rested there, you bet, but no man could!

Suddenly at the very turn of the cañon the old scout stood up and held out one finger. I did likewise for those to my rear, and we started forward, single file. One-Eye had left us maybe ten minutes: it was half an hour's hard work for us to come to where he stood like a thin spruce pole looking off at the sky-line of the farther cliffs.

Scenery by itself may be none too nourishing, but I want to tell you there're things in this scrap-pile of creation out here that a man's simply got to look at. Take that Pecos Cañon. Since I've been in it I'd sure hate to live where I couldn't go look at it any time the notion struck me. I'm an own cousin to the redskin when it comes to being fond of colors, and there they were, blue-gray and red and yellow and some in between that I can't name, laid on in bars as wide as a street and as fresh as if the Almighty's brush had just been lifted from them.

And high up on the north side of the cañon's westerly arm, light gray against a yellow cliff, one of those old ruins was tucked away like a mud-dauber's nest under the eaves of the mesa.

But believe me, while its scenery is warranted eighteen karat, that Pecos Cañon also offers the finest location in the United States for a penitentiary. In the next four hours I turned off the hardest, hottest job I've laid into since I stopped working and went into business. The sunlight danced on those rocks like a medicine man and went through you like a high-salaried pick-pocket. And don't think it made me any cooler to see old One-Eye hopping along with never a sign of moisture on him. You couldn't render ten drops of humidity out of that old aborigine with a cider mill; I'd like to bet the rest of us had evaporated ten pounds apiece before he let us halt on a high ledge to blow. He stopped us there because the ticklishest climb of all was just around the corner; but we didn't stay long—it was too suffocatingly hot standing still.

Our small, squeezed-up roosting-place shaded off on to the face of a wall of rock that was rounded like the side of a barrel—a great smooth knuckle-bone of the earth. To its base from where we hung on might have been five hundred feet and looked a mile.

"Where do we go from here?" inquired one

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of our men, Jim Franks, expectorating into the void.

Well, sir, old One-Eye walked to the end of our ledge, leaned up against that polished shoulder of the world and started out around it like a gnat on a door-knob. After he had gone about six feet he paused and looked back.

"W'at t' —— wait for?" he demanded.

"How 're we goin' to make it?" some one by me sang out, "We ain't got no flies' feet!"

The old fellow's tiny bright eyes sparkled at us for a moment before he answered.

"Don' need fly-feets—need man-feets, Moqui stairs."

Again he moved on, looking down and taking careful-steps, one hand slipping over the surface of the rock.

Of course we couldn't let an Indian put anything over us like that, so we clawed out to the vanishing end of the ledge, and there, hollowed in the nearly vertical breast of the cliff were tiny pockets, too small for a whole foot, or even for half an average American foot.

When I found myself on that slippery rock with nothing but about two inches of toe-hold between me and several million cubic feet of atmosphere, it seemed to me there was something pushing against my chest and other prominent portions of my anatomy with a mighty thrust, slowly but surely pushing me off!

Of course, it was I, myself, pressing close against the rock. If it had been attracted to me as I was to it, no lever on earth could have pried us apart!

About forty feet of the "Moqui stairs," estimated in cold linear measure rather than mental anguish, landed us on an ample shelf covered with those queer, deserted dwellings in a long, shattered row. We felt like taking off our hats to *terra firma*, but needed them to fan with.

Evidently the headquarters of a big colony had been here. The originally sloping ledge had been leveled up to a fine terrace, edged with a retaining wall and topped with a smooth floor of trodden clay and dung. A bold cliff swung far out over the terrace, forming a deep cavity opening on the cañon.

Here and there were piles of stone marking the collapse of masonry. An immense spruce, probably hundreds of years old, at one point had pushed through and displaced the retaining wall. Farther along, there was a round opening in the terrace pavement, which I recognized as the entrance to one of the peculiar sunken chambers so often found in these ruins.

The Mexicans call them *estufias*, but what they were used for I have never heard reasonably explained. I'm inclined to think they were the cliff people's churches, because there's often a stone down inside that looks like an altar.

There's only the one way in or out—the man-hole—and sometimes the very same rough-trimmed spruce-pole is sticking up through it that served the early citizens as a staircase. Here, though, the staircase was lying out on the terrace some distance from the opening.

WE WERE not long in discovering that back under the arch of the cliff it was some smidgeons cooler, and all acted on the discovery except One-Eyed-Hawk, who seemed to prefer poking in a pile of charred sticks with his toe.

"Hey, One-Eye," called Franks, "give us a snake-dance!"

The old scout turned his back and walked away stiffly.

"Hain't you got no respect a-tall for your elders?" teased a young fellow named Baxter. "That ain't no way to talk to a man that might be your great gran'daddy, for all you know."

"If 't wa' n't so infernal hot I'd come aboard of ye fer that," Franks objected.

"Get old One-Eye mad, and he might say something," put in Purse-Mouth Smith, so called because of the effect of extra large quids of tobacco on his facial expression.

Franks guessed One-Eye didn't know more than "six half-words of white man's talk, nohow." Baxter opined that that wouldn't matter:

"He's got nine inches of steel tongue hangin' between his shoulder blades, right where he can reach it easy. You'd think he was goin' to scratch his back."

"You'd never know no better, neither—not in this world," some one else chipped in.

So we traded gibes and fanned and stretched ourselves in the sultry shade, while One-Eyed-Hawk puttered about the terrace. Smith wondered how much farther it was to the top. Franks thought not more than fifty yards in a straight line.

"Though nobody but old One-Eye knows how far we'll have to go to get there. Wonder what the old badger-dog's lookin' at now?"

"Why don't you go ask him?" suggested Baxter. "We'll wait for you—that is, if you'll sure be back by morning."

"Come on," said Franks to me, "let's find out what's detainin' us here."

But One-Eyed-Hawk heard us coming, turned away from the *estufia* opening and came to meet us. He stopped in front of us and whispered:

"Be —— still! Take off boots!"

He seemed so much in earnest I felt I'd just as soon humor him. So down I sat and pulled off my footwear.

Franks shied.

"Great greasers, what next?"

"Take 'em off, Jim," I urged; "you don't know how good it feels!"

That appealed to him, and he followed my lead.

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The others were grinning like medicine masks. The Baxter kid broke loose with a squall, "Make me a che-i-uld again—," whereupon One-Eye ran at him on tiptoe, hissing like a flock of geese on a turnpike road, and we all laughed—Think of it!

Franks and I padded over to the manhole behind the scout, wondering what he had treed. He stopped at the edge and looked in, standing as absolutely motionless as only a redskin can be. He never even blinked and never stopped looking. When I first looked I didn't see a blamed thing but my toes on the edge of a hole that was full of gloom clean to the brim, like a spring after you've stirred up the black, rotting leaves with your bucket. It wasn't so much darkness as a tangled mess of shadow. I couldn't touch bottom.

There was nothing unusual about this *estufia*, apparently, yet One-Eye was so interested, probing it with his keen eyes, like a saw-bones pulling slugs out of an innocent bystander, that I rubbed my own eyes and looked again.

Once I thought Franks had succumbed to the heat and was in danger of falling down cellar; but when I reached out to push him back I caught on to the fact that he had seen something. He looked at me with bulging eyes and opened his mouth, but One-Eye's hand flashed up and covered it.

I began wishing for my glasses, which did no good, because they were here on this desk. It was growing later and darker every minute, and I did not like to have to admit that I had been looking in that earnest fashion at nothing.

One day in San Antone I visited a fortune-teller, and sat and looked into a big glass ball. At first I saw nothing whatever. After a while, though, the thing turned murky and black, and then—I saw a few!

That's the very way the *estufia*-gazing worked. First off, standing there, I was looking as hard as the mischief, not seeing a bit more than a bat in a stove-pipe; then all of a sudden my eyes caught a quiver in the shadows, and the very next instant I was looking at a whopping snake stretched full length on the floor, some ten or twelve feet below me, indistinct, but unmistakable.

Immediately I saw another curled up alongside that one, a still bigger one on the other side, and still more—leaning over suddenly to see, I cracked my head against Franks's. Of course, I couldn't see much on my side, but so far as my view went the serpents were arranged like the spokes of a wheel, tails out, heads in.

I was glad I had humored the old fellow's tabby-toe tactics, for it was a sight well worth seeing. The snakes were not merely large; they were monsters. One was every bit as big around his middle as my thigh, and I'm here to tell you that's some snake.

Now, the longer I looked down in that place the more I puzzled over the way the reptilearium was laid out, and what kept it so.

My eyes got working better, or maybe more light was sifting in as the level rays of the late sun shot back under the cavern roof; at any rate, I made a discovery—one that caused my scalp to crinkle. I started to ask Franks if he had seen the same thing, when One-Eye clapped his brown paw over my muzzle.

This exasperated me; but Franks held up one hand, and I kept quiet, with the idea that he was perhaps figuring how to capture the drove without damaging their hides. I remember thinking the only chance would be to smoke them to death, also that I would not be a volunteer to go down after the smoking to see if they were dead. I leaned over the hole again.

The thing I had meant to ask Franks about was this: I could see one snake more clearly than the others, and suddenly I saw a network of fine thongs around the beast's tail, with a short, thick cord leading to a peg in the floor. Studying them more closely, I saw that the others were fastened in the same way.

By this time I was, so to speak, getting hold of things—feeling round below with my looks like a person feeling ahead of him with his hands in a strange room at night—almost, I remember thinking, as if I was really crawling around down there. And that notion slipped a queer feeling under my breast-bone, too, for a minute.

The thought had kept coming, since I first made out the snakes, that maybe the animals were dead, left in that shape by the cliff-dwellers themselves, though as a matter of fact I had never before heard of any such find. But all at once the devils came alive—not violently, but a plenty to prove them a long way from dead.

While I was looking, something affected them, every one of them at the same instant. Heads moved, ever so little; bodies shifted. One that was half-coiled pulled himself closer together. Alive they surely were!

At that instant I realized they were bound to be rattlers, even ignoring their whacking size, because smooth-tailed snakes could not have been secured as they were.

From the moment when they first began to move, something seemed to be going on down in their den—something I couldn't get the hang of, like when doors creak and swing open at night for nothing. There were little muffled rustlings as the things hissed and scraped their bellies on the floor.

I missed the high, hair-raising buzz that ought to have filled the *estufia* like the singing of thousands of locusts, and again the thought came—Can the creatures be alive? But that

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stealthy rustling kept on, with another, different sound interwoven, hardly enough for my ear to catch: something like wind in an old chimney, but fainter.

Franks and One-Eyed-Hawk turned away and I saw them talking to the others; but that thing had me fascinated. I knew we ought to be getting started in order to be on top before dark, but I'm ashamed to say I felt disinclined to leave.

The sun's rim was flattening on the line of the opposite cliffs, far up the cañon; an angle of the ceiling caught and diffused some of the strong light. In the *estufia* it was not quite so dark, though because of some conflict of lights and shadows the part directly under the opening was the darkest.

"Just another second," I was thinking to myself, "and I'll go."

Most of the serpents I could see now quite plainly, even to the pattern on their skins. I could see the blotched gray surface of the ancient floor. But I did not see anything to clear up the puzzle of the wheel—to explain why all those heads kept bearing on that four-foot space in their midst.

I think I had strained my eyes sifting those shadows; besides, to do much real seeing, the eye needs not only light but movement also.

Well, God help me, there was movement—something more than the squirming of those dirty reptiles!

I was closer than I am to you this minute, yet even while I looked I thought my eyes were liars—it could not be!

A piece of that gray, blotched floor suddenly caught the light and came loose from the rest with a sort of swirl, like a drowned body turning in deep, muddy water; there was a tattered something slowly rising, and Tom Weathers' face turned up, hollow, streaked and stained, thrown back to look at me. His jaws opened and shut tremblingly and his eyes were dull and sick. A feeble, shivering moan sighed from him, and then he broke into a stream of half-connected, rasping speech:

"Brocky—Brocky—help me, boy! Take me out o' here. Brocky, for Go' sake, take me out! I nev' meant to leave you, Brocky, nev' meant to. I swear I nev'. Brocky—'cep' jus' at first! I was—jealous—crazed— Oh, take me out—take me out! You know I came back, don't you? Didn't you know tha'? I did. Brocky—I swear— Too late— Go' help me, 't was too late! O-o-o, Brocky—for Go' sake—Chri' sake—Clarita's— O-o-o— —"

His voice failed, but his lips still moved. He groped toward the light.

There was a rush of feet behind me. I got down and stretched into the hole, trying to reach his hands while others held me. I could not reach him. Franks let down a noosed riata, but he would neither take hold of it nor allow it to slip over his head—it seemed to terrify him, and we were forced to draw it up.

His hands fell to his sides as if they had lost all vitality; he tottered, but still kept his face to the light and called "Brocky! Brocky!" in short, hoarse gasps that made the hissing heads around him weave more angrily, though perhaps because they had learned when he was out of range, no snake struck.

In our frenzy to act, yet fear of doing the fatal thing, we got in one another's way. Some one foolishly fired down through the opening. In the chamber the sound of the shot must have been terrific, for Weathers staggered and put out one foot to catch his balance—and I saw a darting shadow, heard the dull blow on the flesh! He shrieked and tried to leap away—God!—but could not leap far or high enough—like tripped steel springs two giant vipers struck his leg and ankle.

Another hung from his thigh, though I had not seen it strike. He opened his mouth wide, the breath rattled in his throat—he stumbled, shuddered and crumpled in his tracks. Two or three of the things were under him. I saw them, saw the cruel, three-cornered heads waving, heard the strokes and saw the body quiver.

Something thrust hard against me from the rear and squeezed under my arm. One-Eyed-Hawk, his shirt balled about one hand and wrist and his bright knife between his teeth, his lean and stringy torso naked to the hips, slipped over the edge and dropped through the hole. We had begun a scattering fusillade, but stopped.

As I was getting down to look inside again, Franks disemboweled the biggest brute by letting fall a heavy stone across its middle. Something had happened to the rest—their bodies were blindly thrashing and flailing the blood-spattered floor. I looked for One-Eye, and after a bit made him out in the gloom at one side of the chamber, laying Weathers—what had been Weathers—against the wall.

Presently he left the soiled and tattered figure stretched out as if in sleep and returned to the light below the hole, carefully wiping his knife on his trousers while he kicked great, gap-mouthed, evil heads together in a heap. The headless reptiles were squirming still, though more and more feebly, and their tails were still fast.

I felt hot breath on my neck.

"You all right, One-Eye?" called Franks, anxiously peering past me.

One-Eye hunched his shoulders and restored his knife to its snuggery with one smooth motion, then snapped his beady eyes at us.

"Yeh," he answered, "me a' right. Me want 'bout two mans—he'p lif' Stahweddahs. Two mans! No be 'fraid. Snakes no bitum now. Me cut off all um heads."

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THE MAN WHO COULD READ STATIC

By KENNETH GILBERT

IT WAS a moonless night; the vast oily, heaving expanse of the Pacific was lighted only by faint starshine. Also it was quite warm, despite the fact that we were off the north Pacific coast and headed toward Alaska.

When six bells—eleven o'clock—struck and sleep was no nearer being wooed I threw off the berth covers, dressed lightly and sought the wireless room, where I knew I would find Harmon. I realized that it was a violation of the ship's rules to visit the wireless operator—when you have a message, you know, you give it to the purser—but I had long been acquainted with Harmon; and—it was late.

I found him hunched in his chair before a desk on which were arranged the myriad of coils, slides, brass knobs and levers of the wireless apparatus. The receiving-telephones were clamped tightly on his head, and he was staring vacantly at the polished black rubber of the receiver case. He turned quickly as I entered and smiled a recognition.

"Hello, Burdett," he greeted. "Sit down. Glad you dropped in. I was getting lonesome."

"Anything doing tonight?" I asked as I proffered my cigaret-case.

"No," he replied; "it's unusually quiet. Haven't heard a spark for half an hour. But of course there's the infernal static, and it's unusually heavy tonight."

"Static?" I queried.

"Electrical discharges in the ether," he explained. "Probably they are caused by distant thunder-storms. Want to hear them?"

And he placed the receivers on my head.

At first I heard nothing. Then as my eardrums unconsciously attuned themselves there came to me what sounded like the murmur of a distant waterfall, irregularly punctuated as if by the crash of sheets of rain on a tin roof. The voice of the elements—an Omnipotent Force—was speaking to me across the limitless space of the ether void.

"Why, it sounds just like some one 'sending!' " I exclaimed. "Dot—dot—dash! Can't you operators read it?"

A shadow crossed Harmon's face.

"Well," he replied, slowly, "we can and we can't. There's no regularity to it, you know. Here and there you can pick out a character that resembles a Morse letter, and by stringing them together you could doubtless make out anything you wish; a message from Mars asking William Hohenzollern how he came to fall down on the job of making the world safe for militarism, or word that you've fallen heir to the million-dollar estate of an uncle you never had. But as a rule it's just a meaningless jumble.

"And yet when I'm sitting alone here night after night I fall into the habit of trying to make sense of it. And that's where a person makes a mistake. Gets on your nerves until you finally imagine you are understanding it.

"There was Dick Bradshaw——"

Harmon paused long enough to set his tuning-coil at the commercial wave-length of six hundred meters, ready to pick up a chance call. Then he leaned back easily in his swivel chair.

I RAN with him on the old *Pawtucket* between Seattle and Nome (he went on reflectively). He was the smartest wireless operator I ever knew. But it wouldn't be fair to call him merely an operator; he was an expert. Started in with the Marconi people as second operator of a banana-boat on the South American run, and before he'd been with them six months they had him in the experimenting-laboratory.

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There he set a pace. Studied and worked all day and half the night. The only time he paused was when he got married. Girl he had known since he was kid; a winsome, wistful little thing. She'd just finished a training-school for teachers and was to have gone to Alaska as an instructor in the government Indian school when Bradshaw married her.

You'd think that as she had displayed enough pluck to become a teacher with the intention of making good in Alaska she'd have been just a little more hard-headed about domestic life. Yet perhaps few women could have put up with the way Dick neglected her, or anyway the way she thought she was neglected. Of course he gave her everything they could afford, but he was hot on the trail of what he called "the Big Idea," and he couldn't pay her the attention she demanded. Naturally she was resentful.

As I said he paused long enough in his work to get married, and then began working again harder than ever. Night after night he'd be at the laboratory when he should have been at home.

You see, he'd conceived the "bug" theory that some static—not all of it, mind you—was something more than ordinary lightning flashes. Figured that if the people on some neighboring planet ever set out to communicate with us they would be using some sort of wireless system like ours. Crazy enough hunch, you'll say, but for that matter you can't prove he was wrong.

Of course the company wasn't paying him to fritter his time away in that direction; they wanted practical stuff. So he had to work on his idea out of regular hours, which meant that he had to work nights. And that is what caused him and Lucy to split.

She pouted, pleaded and even cried. Dick would try to get interested in the little things that appealed to her, but at the dinner-table when she'd be all aglow over something she had seen or done that day she'd discover him drawing plans on the table-cloth, a million miles from the thread of her story. Then he'd try to make amends, and only succeed in making it worse.

This couldn't keep up forever. Lucy finally grew defiant, and the inevitable followed quickly enough. There was young Forsythe, son of the superintendent who was Dick's boss, and he was apparently right on the job when it came to consolations. Dick really should not have been surprized when he came home one night to find a note from Lucy saying she had gone.

She didn't say where, nor whether she had gone alone. Dick, crazy jealous, jumped to the conclusion that young Forsythe was mixed up in it. So he dug up his gun and started hunting for Forsythe.

He didn't hunt far. Two blocks away he met Forsythe and the superintendent turning the corner in their machine. Gun in hand, Dick leaped on the running-board of their machine.

"Where is she?" he screamed, thrusting the gun against young Forsythe's body.

Quick-wittedly Forsythe acted without answering. He seized Dick's arm and the next second was outside the machine employing college football tactics. With the help of the chauffeur he disarmed Bradshaw.

Forsythe denied that he had seen Lucy for days and even offered to help Dick hunt for her. The superintendent was for having Dick jailed for assault, but young Forsythe wouldn't hear of it, nor would he permit Dick to be discharged. The upshot was that the superintendent finally decided to send Dick to sea as an operator. Bradshaw, sick at heart and despairing, offered no protest.

For six months he knocked about the Atlantic from ship to ship, and then one day he showed up at Seattle with a letter from the division offices, saying he was to take charge of the *Pawtucket's* set. I was to be his second operator.

HE WAS the queerest fellow I ever met. A tall, slender chap, dark complexioned and with big, moody, dark-brown eyes. And very quiet. Just introduced himself and then sort of took hold of things. I started to explain the peculiarities of the *Pawtucket's* set—every wireless outfit seems to have an individuality, you know—but he waved me to silence.

Lord, but that man knew his business! He hadn't been there fifteen minutes before he'd spotted a weakness I had sought for a month. And that night, when the old *Pawtucket* pushed her nose through the Straits and headed for Nome and the Bering Sea, her wireless had never worked with more power nor with a more finely attuned spark.

Now there's a peculiarity about North Pacific waters as regards wireless work. The farther north you go the worse the static becomes. Maybe it is because of the proximity of the magnetic pole, or possibly the northern lights have something to do with it. The lights act on wireless apparatus like great sending-stations, if the scientific sharps have it right.

And that first night out the static was surely on the job. Just a continuous, crashing roar that made it nearly impossible to work with a station more than a few miles distant. I told Bradshaw about it when he relieved me at midnight.

I had no sooner mentioned static than he displayed the first sign of real interest he had shown since he came aboard. He hastily slipped on the receivers.

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"Great!" he exclaimed. "Finest I've ever heard. What an opportunity!"

"I don't get you," I remarked innocently enough.

And then he turned those big, moody eyes on me. They shone with a glare I had not noticed before.

"Of course you don't get me, Harmon," he replied airily. "None of you helpless, ignorant operators do. Probably you never will. But at the risk of being misunderstood I'll tell you."

And he rolled his eyes.

"I'm learning to read static."

"The —— you are," I said to myself.

I guessed then what I had begun to suspect a moment before; the man was stark crazy.

"It will be the greatest discovery since wireless was invented," he went on enthusiastically, his voice rising as his great eyes roved wildly about. "Something no one has ever done—read the voices from the planets! Up there they see—they know—what can not they tell us?

"I've been practising and experimenting for a long time. But back at the laboratory and on the Atlantic there was not so much static and my studies were hampered. But now—now—" and he chuckled in a way that sent a prickly feeling down my spine— "I'm going to have my chance.

"I'll be famous!" he concluded shrilly. "I shall be able to do something no one else in the world has done."

Of course I realized that Bradshaw was unbalanced and for that reason perhaps should not be trusted with a wireless watch with the lives of passengers depending upon him. But I tell you the man was sane otherwise; just cracked on this one subject.

And I knew that if I went to Captain Gregg, our hard-bitten, unimaginative old skipper, I would have a hard time explaining how a wireless operator who could do his work better than his average fellow was dangerous just because he thought he could read signals that were sent out by no wireless set constructed by human hands. It would not be easy to make a practical, common-sense old sea-dog like Gregg understand.

So I just backed out of the door and went to my stateroom. But a half-dozen times during the night I awoke and slipped up to the wireless room and peered in. And each time I found Bradshaw sitting like a wax figure in his chair, and peering at the receiver as if fascinated by what he heard.

Sometimes he would scratch away on a writing-pad and then after looking at what he had written tear off the sheet and throw it away. When I took the watch next morning I found the waste-basket half-filled with scraps of papers that bore unintelligible gibberish—maudlin mutterings from nowhere, you might call them.

For two days and nights it kept up; I losing good sleep trying to keep watch on Bradshaw, and he just naturally going about his work, normal in all respects but for this cracked idea of trying to translate into human thought the sounds of a distant thunder-storm. And then we smashed right into one of the worst blows I ever saw, which is saying something for these near-Arctic waters.

She was beginning to whoop it up when I turned into my berth at eight bells to get a few hours' sleep before relieving Bradshaw at midnight. And when the steward awoke me to go on watch I could tell by the lurch and roll of the ship that we were fair into it. Also while I dressed I could see almost continuous flashes of lightning and hear the steady bass-drumming of thunder that told me a bad electrical storm had come along with the wind.

I instantly thought of Bradshaw. During an electrical storm, you know, it's dangerous to keep a wireless watch. The great wire aerials at the trucks, built to catch faint electrical signals thousands of miles distant, can just as easily pick up a bolt of lightning along with a wireless spark. And then too during a thunder-storm the static is so bad you can't hear anything but the sound of the lightning, so it is useless to risk your life trying to stand watch. Bradshaw, I figured, would be on guard, but well away from the dangerous receiving-set.

BUT he wasn't. When I opened the door there he sat at the operating-table in the midst of that awful din with the sparks of static discharges—not real lightning bolts, mind you, but the mere overflow of electrical energy in the air—spitting off the ends of the binding-posts on the receiving-set. His face had a strained look, as if some one was speaking to him in an unintelligible foreign language and he was trying hard to understand. Occasionally he would jot down something on a blank telegraph form.

"For ——'s sake!" I exclaimed, seizing him by the shoulder.

But he spun around on me with such fury in his eyes that I backed away. After all if the fool wanted to dare Providence to do its worst it was his own funeral.

Yet I was debating with myself whether I really ought to let him go on to almost certain doom when he sprang to his feet.

"I've got it! I've got it!" he exclaimed, tearing off a sheet of paper and waving it before my eyes.

Then he suddenly bolted out of the door.

I followed him. By the dim light of deck-lamps I saw him work his way skilfully from deck-house to deck-house through the blinding spray of great combers that regularly dashed

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over the hurricane deck. He ran up the bridge ladder and handed the paper to the captain, who, swathed in oilskins, had taken the watch.

Gregg held the paper up to the lighted square of the chart-house window and wrinkled his brows. He puzzled for a second, and then straightened up.

"What nonsense is this?" he roared.

"It's a message, sir," responded Bradshaw.

"Oh, it is, is it?" tartly retorted the skipper. "And what does it mean, may I ask?"

"Of that I am not sure," said Bradshaw noncommittally.

"Well, but who is it from?" demanded the captain as a new thought struck him and he looked at Dick shrewdly.

Right there was where I began to feel sorry for Bradshaw. If he blurted out the truth it was all off with him. Lunatic though I knew him to be, I could not wish to see him trapped thus.

But the uncanny cunning that a crazy person sometimes displays came to his aid. He drew himself up rather stiffly.

"I know nothing more than that this message came, sir, and there was no signature," he replied, looking the captain squarely in the eyes.

Gregg glared at him a moment and then spat in disgust. I could see he was baffled.

"——'s bells!" he exclaimed. Here, Watson," he called to the first officer, who stood near. "See what you can make of this."

Watson came up, and as the skipper held the message to the light I bent over and read what Bradshaw had written. No wonder the captain was indignant.

There were two lines of writing. The first was a mere string of letters that made no pronounceable word. The second line was little better. There were two groups of letters—

B-i-n-c-l-e m-o-v-d.

That was all. The first officer spelled it out, making a stab at the pronunciation.

"Bincle moved!" exclaimed Bradshaw.

"Yeh?" rasped Gregg, his patience worn to a frzaale. "And what in the name of the Great Hairless Mexican Hippopotamus has 'bincle's' moving got to do with us?"

"Bincle, b-i-n-c-l-e," Watson was saying softly to himself, his brows creased like those of a man who had hold of the slippery tail of an idea that's trying to get away from him. "Bincle, bincle—binnacle!"

Bradshaw looked as if he could have hugged him out of sheer gratefulness.

"Binnacle moved!" Dick announced triumphantly.

The two navigators started and looked hard at each other. In two steps Gregg was at the wheel and peering at the lighted compass-card.

"But our binnacle is not moved," he insisted. "At least not so you could notice it."

"Binnacle Rock?" hazarded Watson.

"There is a Binnacle Rock?" queried Bradshaw anxiously.

Gregg looked at him queerly.

"Yes," he said after a pause, "forty miles to east-ard. But what's this foolishness about its being moved? It's a round-topped affair that looks like a ship's binnacle turned upside down, and it weighs —— knows how many tons. Who would or could move that?"

Bradshaw merely shrugged.

"Oh, very well!" snorted the skipper, turning away. "Here, Mr. Watson, I don't know the meaning of this flapdoodle, but I propose to find out. There may be something wrong with our compass. Give her a slow bell and turn on the searchlights.

"As for you, my man," he added, turning to Bradshaw, "if this is some smart trick of yours you'll hear from me."

THE electrical storm had passed quickly, and with it the rain. The long, slender fingers of the searchlight beams poked through the blackness ahead, and we wallowed along at slow speed.

"Breakers!" suddenly bawled the man in the crow's-nest as something shot up milky-white in the searchlights' glare a quarter of a mile ahead.

"What the—" began the skipper as he jumped for the engine-room telegraph and rang for reverse.

"We're off our course!" he exclaimed as the *Pawtucket* shuddered to a stop and then began to go astern.

The first officer was already checking up with the compass, helmsman, chart and log. A sounding showed no bottom.

"I don't savvy it, captain," he finally reported. "Everything seems to be all right. There was never a bit of land within forty miles of this spot before."

And yet, seemingly giving his words the lie, there just ahead a black bulk covered with a lather of foam humped itself like the back of a sperm whale.

"Binnacle Rock, by the gods!" exclaimed the first officer.

But the skipper shook his head.

"Not old Binnacle," he decided. "I've seen him too many times. But it might be his twin brother. Half-speed again, and port your helm."

Well, the skipper was right; it wasn't old Binnacle. Mount Katmai in Alaska had been blowing off, and the ocean floor, just like rotten ice, had sunk in one spot and raised in another. They never did find the original Binnacle, but you can bet the Government hydrographic

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sharks got busy when Gregg reported this new rock.

Of course, he immediately sent a wireless broadcast, reporting the find, but the static was heavy, and it is possible we were not heard by many ships.

I'll confess I felt a little shaky when I went back to the wireless room and took the watch; a person never witnesses an odd coincidence without feeling a little screwy about it for a time. The static was still roaring but gradually growing weaker as the thunder-storm swept farther and farther away. But nothing more happened. Gregg kept the *Pawtucket* on a slow bell until we got off Nome; just groped his way, not knowing what else had happened to the ocean floor.

At Nome we lightered our cargo and passengers ashore, and then turned south again. The shipping agent at Nome had told us the *Mohave*, our sister ship on the run, had left for the south twelve hours before. We missed meeting her somehow, and the infernal static was so heavy that far north that old "Buck" Braley, her wireless operator, and the smoothest sender in the Pacific, had been unable to send us a report of her position.

That night when we were under weigh again—the skipper was back-tracking his course like a setter dog, certain of only one channel, and that one the way he had come—Bradshaw came into the wireless room an hour before time for him to go on watch. He had scarcely spoken to me since the night of the storm; seemed like he was more morose than ever.

As for my part I regarded him as the biggest mystery I had ever run across; I couldn't figure whether I was splitting watches with just an ordinary insane man or with some superhuman individual about three hundred years ahead of his time. I promised myself one thing, however; that when we reached Seattle I was going to make my next trip with a watch partner of about my own speed.

So I merely nodded to him when he showed up that night, and without a word he flopped himself on the couch, propped himself on one elbow and began to stare at nothing.

Before he came I had been trying to keep watch and read a magazine at the same time. When he sat down I picked up the magazine and began reading again. But I had lost the thread of the story. Him lying there, silent and unmoving as a statue, finally got on my nerves.

After two or three futile attempts to draw him into conversation I grew fidgety. I tried to busy myself tuning up the set—anything to attract his attention and mine—but it was no go. Finally my nerves got the better of me.

"For ——'s sake, say something—do something!" I exclaimed irritably without turning.

Then I heard a queer, little clucking noise behind me. I turned quickly and there was Bradshaw with a big tear glistening on each cheek.

"—— take it, Dick, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings," I assured him. "Here, buck up."

And I put my hand on his shoulder. But he shook me off and put his head down on the couch and sobbed like a broken-hearted kid.

(Harmon paused and removed the telephones from his head. The static was too heavy to hear the spark of another ship or station, or maybe the steady crash-crash of it distracted his attention from the telling of the story.)

THAT was the second time on the voyage when I was undecided what to do (he resumed). I'll admit being pretty near helpless when a woman begins crying, but I'll throw up both hands when a man starts in.

So I just sat there and wriggled in uneasiness while it lasted. It wasn't long at that. Pretty soon Bradshaw lifted his head, his eyes softer than I had ever seen them before, and began to talk.

He told me all—everything about his home life that I have told you, and a lot more that I am not going to tell even you, Burdett. Just babbled away, and I let him run despite the fact that I felt like an eavesdropper. But I saw it was doing him good, so I let him go on.

He talked for nearly an hour, his voice seldom varying from its monotonous undertone. It was only when he had finished, just completely run down as it were, that his voice rang with feeling.

"God knows how I loved her, Harmon!" he exclaimed. "And the curse of it is I didn't discover it until she had gone. If it would bring her back to me I'd follow her to the ends of the earth; but I know Lucy. She's sickened of me, and I can't find it in my heart to blame her. She thought she was marrying a man, and instead I treated her as if she were merely a piece of wireless apparatus."

I mumbled something I intended for consolation, but there was little I could say. Seemed like it was no time for an outsider to put in anyway. I noticed by the clock that it was near midnight, so I gladly turned over the watch to Bradshaw.

While he was talking I had heard the deckhands busy out on the topside, lashing everything down for a blow. As I stepped out of the wireless room I could feel the first of it; a succession of hot puffs and then a steady, rising gale that snored up out of the southwest. While I was making my way to my stateroom there was a blinding flash of lightning and a deafening crash of thunder; and then came the rain—barrels of it.

The *Pawtucket* was a good old seaboat—

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she'd never have stood it if she hadn't been. When that blow struck her she heeled over to starboard and hung there a minute or so before she righted herself. Then she began to lift and drop regularly as she settled down to business.

But it seemed like this was no ordinary blow. The wind was roaring a seventy-mile gale within no time; but it didn't stop there. On up the scale it went until it struck us with the force of a hurricane. I learned afterward we had busted right into a typhon that had wandered northward along the Japan Current from the China Sea.

And the lightning that came with it! Sheet after sheet of blinding glare with an almost continuous cannonading of thunder until it seemed as if we were in the midst of flashing guns in a night artillery duel.

I was just unlacing my shoes when I suddenly thought of Bradshaw. Intuitively I guessed what the poor, mad fool must be up to, as no sane man would have remained in the wireless room during that fearful orgy of the elements unless the receiving-apparatus had been cut out and the aerial grounded. When I threw open the door of the wireless room a minute later I saw I had guessed right.

There he sat, the telephones clamped on his head while a devilish blue glare from the forked fire that was hissing off the overcharged circuits lighted his face with an unearthly glow. The operating-table was littered with fragments of paper on which he had been senselessly scribbling. He was rocking back and forth and moaning something that sounded like a prayer.

"Oh, God!" he mumbled. "Again! Again!"

I lunged forward for the big switch that would cut out the set and send the deadly ether current to ground. It was then he saw me for the first time and realized what I was about to do. With an animal-like scream he leaped to his feet and swung aloft the chair on which he had been sitting.

"—— you!" he snarled. "If you touch that switch you'll be a murderer, and so will I!"

Naturally I paused. And thus we stood looking at each other for a full half-minute, Bradshaw's breath coming in quick, short gasps while his glaring eyes held mine.

Then the world suddenly reeled and dissolved into blinding light. Involuntarily my eyes snapped shut. The thunder of a thousand cataracts beat upon my ears, and with it a splitting, tearing sound. A pungent, sulfurous-like smell stung my nostrils. I opened my eyes a second later to see Bradshaw crumpled into a heap on the floor.

The receiving-set was a smoking ruin. Bradshaw had played Ajax-daring-the-lightning once too often.

I quickly lifted his head and saw he was unconscious but still breathing. From each ear a long, livid burn disappeared down the side of his neck. A tiny fraction of the lightning bolt the aerial had caught had leaped from the receiving-telephones on Bradshaw's head into his body.

Just then the door was flung open. Watson stood there.

"Lightning struck the foremast," he explained.

Then he saw Bradshaw.

"Got it, did he?"

I whistled through the speaking-tube to the bridge, telling them to get the doctor. Then Watson and I lifted the unconscious man to the couch. As we straightened him up his hand brushed to the floor a piece of paper with which the telegraph desk was littered.

I don't know what made me pause unless it was that my eyes caught a flash of those letters of terrible portent to the mariner—S. O. S.—scrawled in Bradshaw's hand. Turning Dick over to Watson, I held the paper up to the light.

It was covered with writing, most of it in unintelligible groups of words. Yet there was the combination S. O. S. that had caught by eyes. In the next disjointed sentence there were the figures, 60 N; 168 W. I handed it to Watson.

"He was receiving this when the bolt came," I explained.

Watson puzzled over it for a moment; then straightened up with a queer look in his eyes.

"Latitude sixty north; longitude one sixty-eight west," he translated. "Why, that's the position of the new rock we almost piled up on that night!"

Just then the doctor and Captain Gregg arrived.

Watson handed the skipper the message. The doctor examined Bradshaw and announced the operator would be all right in a few hours.

"Got some bad burns about his head," said the doctor, "but he can thank his lucky stars it was no worse."

He ordered a steward to carry Dick to the sick-bay.

"What d'ye make of this, Harmon?" asked the skipper after he had frowned over the message.

But I could supplement nothing of apparent value.

"I think Bradshaw's crazy," announced Gregg frankly and positively. "But then this S. O. S. call rather puts us in a hole," he added helplessly. "I was aiming to miss that rock by fifty miles."

"What say, Mr. Watson? Shall we take a shot over there just to satisfy ourselves?"

"I think it's our duty, sir," replied the mate.

Daylight came, and an hour later we were blanketed in fog. There was now no wind, and, relieved of pressure from this source, the sea

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was fast resuming the long reach and lift of easy ground-swells.

After calling at the sick-bay and being told that Bradshaw had recovered consciousness and had gone off again into a healthful sleep, I slipped up to the bridge, for the wireless set was out of commission and there was no use standing watch.

We were nearing the position of the rock now, and with the coming of the fog Gregg ordered the ship under a slow bell. Our big siren kept sending its wailing challenge out through the mist at regular intervals. For a half-hour we kept on thus.

Then suddenly back to us out of the fog curtain there came from ahead the answering note of a foghorn, an echoing replica of our own. Gregg started.

"The *Mohave*, by ——!" he exclaimed. "She's the only vessel on this run that has a siren like ours."

Once more our siren queried, and again came the answer, nearer now. With it came the roar of breakers. Then through a passing rift in the screening mist we glimpsed a half-mile ahead the round, seaweed-covered shape of the new-born island we had discovered on our upward trip.

But we saw more. Half-way aground on the unyielding surface of the rock perched the battered hulk of our sister ship the *Mohave*.

Because of the static, Buck Braley, her wireless operator, apparently hadn't received our warning about the new rock. Confidently following southward the course over which she had steamed hundreds of times—the regular Alaska sea-lane—she had piled on the reef at flood tide. Now, with the ebb tide approaching, she hung broken and helpless.

It was pitiful, the wreck of that beautiful ship. She lay oddly; bow and stern low, yet high amidships, as if her back was broken. Even as we watched, her stern sagged lower. Despite the comparative calm she was fast breaking in two.

IT WAS an hour before we got the last of the survivors aboard. They were huddled on our lee deck, and we were just herding them into the dining-saloon for something hot to eat when I saw Dick. Evidently awakened by the tumult of shouting and rattling gear, he had come up to the head of the sick-bay companionway.

There he stood looking at the *Mohave's* passengers in incomprehending bewilderment. He was pale and peaked-looking, yet his eyes shone with a sanity I had never seen in them before. The shock had burned the craziness right out of his mind.

He peered sharply, then gave a half-choked cry and leaped toward one of the survivors—a pretty little woman. She saw him as he cried out, and although he was quick she met him half-way.

With her arms around his neck she told him how she had gone to Alaska to carry out her original intention to become a teacher of Aleuts. But she had soon sickened of it, and was on the way home to beg forgiveness.

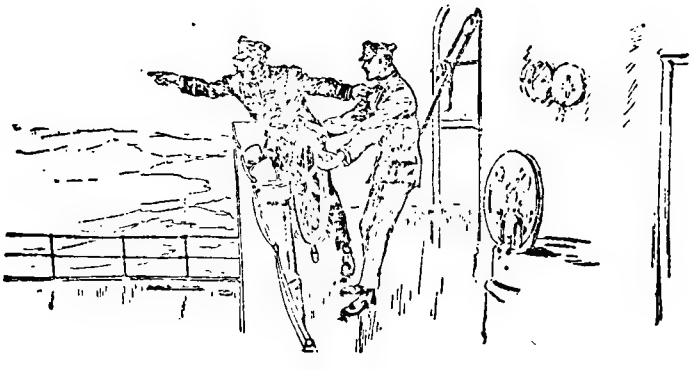
HARMON paused and flicked his dead cigaret-stub out of the port-hole. Then he slipped on the telephone receivers and deftly "tuned in" the high-frequency spark of a Navy station.

"But you haven't explained the static message about the *Mohave*," I protested.

Harmon grinned. "'Once a coincidence; twice a miracle,'" he recited. "Static nothing!"

"Then it was—" I began.

"Buck Braley of the *Mohave*," finished Harmon. "That old lightning-jerker wouldn't thank you for intimating his smooth sending sounded like a thunder-storm."



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ANOTHER new member of our writers' brigade follows the old Camp-Fire custom on the occasion of his first story in our magazine.

Seattle, Wash.

Until I began to review my own history, that I might stand up and introduce myself at the Camp-Fire, it never occurred to me that perhaps for once in my life I was among my own kind. I have been a railroad and commercial telegrapher, a wireless operator, an electrician, a Navy bluejacket, newspaper reporter, and, yea, even city editor of a metropolitan daily. Seems as though I had been a sort of adventurer all my life, without suspecting it.

I WAS born in a Wisconsin backwoods village, (not in a log cabin, however), and I am convinced now that my nativity determined that I should roam the world in search of adventure, for I never found one in the home town after fifteen years of trying. When I learned telegraphy, I felt that my opportunity to still hunt the unusual had arrived. Yet, although I "boomed" through State after State, and worked for eighteen different railroads in two years, I regarded the result of my pursuit as vain. Four years in the Navy, during which I combed the odd corners of the Orient—and my water trail was 46,000 miles long—without ever catching up in my chase, so I thought. Then came years as a newspaper man—leg-work, police reporter, general assignments, feature writing, city editor—and I became so blasé that I possibly met the elusive sprite many times without recognizing her true identity. And I guess that's the way with every adventurer.

Looking back now, I recall being in a landing party that succored the consulate party of a beleaguered village on the Yangste during the Chinese revolution. Then, too, a drizzly night on a side street in Shanghai, when the plop-plop of my 'ricksha man's sandals was the only sound that broke the stillness; how a dark form appeared suddenly, steel gleamed under the dim street light, and my 'ricksha man flinched, thereby becoming the only person who ever saved my life, for right behind us was another 'ricksha with two of my shipmates, and the would-be assailant did not stop to strike again. Likewise, there were the fights we had on Ship Street in Hong Kong, with men from the foreign fleets, and the typhoon in the Yellow Sea, which jammed our rudder and held us in the trough, helpless, for hours. All near-adventures, yet lacking something, it seems.

FICTION writing, I began one night at sea during a particularly tedious mid-watch in the wireless room. Yet it was nearly five years later that I sold my first story. Doubtless I would have sold one sooner, had I applied myself harder.

But if I never found the kind of adventure I sought, it is likely that I never will, because my wife tells me that hereafter I'll do my adventuring in the pages of my stories and not elsewhere. And there are two other reasons that lend strength to her argument; you married adventurers will understand what I mean when I say their clothes cost something scandalous these days.—KENNETH GILBERT.

AS STATED before, Edgar Young started something when he asked "What is the spirit of adventure, biologically speaking? I'm out of my depth, as I've frequently been before in this discussion, but the water's fine if you can swim:

Cleveland, Ohio.

Though I have been a reader of *Adventure* since its beginning, I have never written to you. Not that I didn't enjoy it—the Camp-Fire is the club-like atmosphere of thinkers and doers—but that I was not moved to write until Edgar Young's query and Richard H. McDonald's admirable answer stirred my ambition.

ADVENTURE is the essence of life. That is why a magazine like *Adventure* appeals. It enlarges the field of ideas for the average man, who is generally forced by circumstances, or his own inclination, to a circumscribed arena for his experience. History is a record of the adventures experienced by the human race. Though the story is thrilling when relating the deeds of crowds—Romans, Greeks, the Bible People and the modern nations, it becomes absorbing when it tells of individuals. Who has not among your readers imagined himself into the personality of an interesting fictionized character or a historical hero? Alexander, he who sighed for more worlds to conquer; who would not be proud of the glory of Napoleon without his butchery, or the deeds of a Bismarck without being responsible for the German nuisance?

Most people are contented to reach the five thousand dollars a year class, but the adventure of reaching a million interests Americans. Roosevelt was a beau ideal in the ramification his adventures took. His naturalist expedition to South America, where he discovered the "River of Doubt," might be interesting as a story of travel to some, to others his ideas in regard to some of the strange animals would be the most absorbing adventure. Darwin's "Origin of Species" as a biological adventure made the world sit up, while nowadays we are more interested in adventuring among machinery and invention.

EVERY one is an adventurer. Even he who never cares to wander far from his own fireside. Wadsworth, in celebrating a tea-pot, disclosed the intimate life of small and ordinary things. The electrons that form the existence of a grain of sand,

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constitute the sidereal universe; though our limited human ideas measure their importance small to the great. The reason for adventure is to find new ideas, and we become adventurous in proportion as we become bored with the ideas already known, and are eager to seek.

Thus adventure is an emprise for ideas. The young man who is in love, and fondly imagines the old, old story of the incomparable she, is constantly renewing a very old experience, and always very new, and if their tastes incline, they can spend a life-long in the study of the erotic psychology. But to the more robust the familiar bores, and then away to other worlds!

The journey to other worlds is most tedious and so thankless that it does not appeal to the generality of poeple; these worlds, numerous as the stars, have each their idea experience to teach. But the most difficult, the most forbidding, is to adventure in the ideas about the Ruler of all these worlds: God.—LOUIS SIEGEL.

FROM Buck Connor comes some interesting data as to who killed General Custer. As I wrote Mr. Connor's name just now it came to me with a sort of sudden surprise that I've never met him. Of course I knew I hadn't, but after you've been friends with a man by letter for a number of years you sort of lose sight of the fact that you've never laid eyes on him. I'd hate to lose the friends Camp-Fire has brought me but whom I've never seen and I imagine quite a good many of you can say the same thing, for Camp-Fire has a way of getting us acquainted among ourselves even if we can't all really sit down together.

By the way, it would be some sitting, that! There must be a million of us. And right there's a little problem for the mathematically inclined among us—if you build a fire, how much ground will if take for a million people to sit down around it and how big a fire will it take to be seen by all? And how far back will the first row have to sit to keep from getting singed? Might make allowance for aisles, too. If there were no aisles, how long would it take the assemblage to disperse? How far into the gathering could a human voice carry distinctly? Come forward, statistics experts, and tell the rest of us about it.

Here is Buck Connor's letter:

University of New Mexico,
Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Here is a clipping I have dug up that will set at rest many little arguments relative to the man who killed Custer. I myself have heard many tales on the reservations—generally handed out by the knowing ones (?) concerning the man who actually gave General Custer the long sleep. Some claimed it was an Ogallala named Oeshilla Tonka (Big Boy) who put General Custer on the trail that leads West. But this seems authentic.

It might be well to publish it in Camp-Fire, and then we will see if Uncle Frank comes out of the brush with a shot or two. I have a lot of respect for Uncle Frank, and his talks of the Injuns are interesting. I happened to have a heap smoke and long pow-pow with him last season—he's there and no mistake.—BUCK CONNOR.

WHEN I wrote to Mr. Connor to get the date of the clipping he replied as follows:

Albuquerque, New Mexico.

About the Rain-In-The-Face clipping. That thing has been smothered for years among my "trash" and I just ran across it when I sent it on to Mr. Wade. It is at least twenty years old, and that alone makes it more valuable, because time and fading memory have not warped or distorted the facts of the case. If you note how many different versions there are of Billy the Kid and other notorious characters to-day so many have a different story, and each one assures us that his own is the gospel. I learned while with the Sioux that one Injun named Big Boy (Ocshilla Tonka) had killed General Custer, and afterward ate a piece of his heart. But it was hard to substantiate the story. Personally, I feel inclined to accept the clipping as authentic.—BUCK CONNOR.

THIS is the clipping:

Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The *Sentinel's* special correspondent at Miles City, Montana Territory, telegraphs to-night a sensational matter in the shape of a statement by Rain-In-The-Face, the Indian Chief who killed General Custer in the memorable Indian fight of June 21, 1876.

FROM that day to this there has been a mystery hanging about the affair, from the fact that not a man of General Custer's little band escaped death to tell the story of their fate, and the historian has no other source from which to fill the page than the horrible imagination which clustered around the dead and mutilated bodies of the gallant commander and his troops, heightened by the memories of the smoldering ruins of the Indian village to capture which they paid the penalty of their recklessness with their lives.

WHILE the correspondent was in the merchandising house of Mr. J. J. Graham, at Fort Keogh, three Indian Chiefs, Rain-In-The-Face, Two Roads and Spotted Eagle—who surrendered to General Miles last Spring—came in, as is their custom, being encamped only two miles away, on Tongue River, for the purpose of conversation with Mr. Wm. M. Courtenay, the clerk and interpreter of the establishment, in whom the Indians religiously believe. Mr. Courtenay was reading Wittaker's Life of Custer, and in turning the leaves of the book one of the Indians caught sight of his own picture, which he immediately recognized. They then took the book from Mr. Courtenay, and found all their portraits, but exhibited very little emotion of pleasure or otherwise, until one of them turned a page and the picture of General Custer was revealed.

AT THIS Rain-In-The-Face became greatly excited, going through all the gyrations of the war dance, and giving the Sioux war-whoop at the top of his voice. After he had got through with

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his wild demonstration, but still exhibiting the greatest anger, he struck the picture with his hand and, with a demoniac sneer on his face, exclaimed in the Sioux tongue: "I killed him. I made many holes in him. He once took my liberty. I took his life. I am glad I did." On being told by a bystander that General Custer was still living, Rain-In-The-Face became very violent, and hissed between his teeth: "Your tongue is forked," which is the Sioux figure for "you lie."

Continuing he said: "I visited his body after the battle. I cut him open. I ate part of his liver. I am glad I killed him. He was bad to my people. He kill many warriors."

It is a superstition among the Sioux that by eating the liver of a valorous victim the warrior so eating obtains all his cunning and prowess. This is the first authentic account of General Custer's death ever given.

THIS letter was written over two years ago, April 6, 1918, and the writer said that in about two years he expected to be back from his second trip to the Jivero county. Perhaps he is back now; if so, I know Camp-Fire will be eager to hear all he's willing to tell us. Meanwhile I've sent a letter to the permanent address he gave, with no reply as yet.

Houston, Texas.

I see some of the readers are interested in and looking for facts, of the Jivero Indians of Ecuador and Peru. So perhaps the little I know of them will be of interest.

HAVING been born with the wanderlust and a preference for the trails that lead far from the white man's road, consequently among the places I have passed is the country of the Jiveros.

I left Guayaquil in February of 1916 *via* Santa Rosa and Loja, over the Andes to the Zamora River (and returning left the Jivero country the latter part of February, 1917). Looking for placer gold. The Jivero country begins just over the Andes, at an altitude of about 900 meters, on the headwaters of the Rio Santiago, which includes the Zamora, Pauti, Pastaca and Morona, with numerous tributaries, and extends south to the Marañon and Amazon, and west I don't know just how far, but not to the Napo.

I STARTED in there with two partners, but they lost their nerve (and who could blame them) before we reached the frontier of the Jivero country. However, I went on alone and was very glad later that they went back, as it is a poor place for a man unless he knows something of the traits of the savage people. That I still carry my own head goes to show that I had no trouble with them. I attended some of their dances, feasts, etc., learned enough of their language to get by with some 80 or 100 words when I try to count them. Some of the Jiveros on the edge of their country speak some Spanish, but in the interior none.

They live in houses built in the form of an ellipse. I have seen a number 200 feet long 50 to 75 feet wide and 25 to 80 to the peak. Walls are of split churta purlins and rafters of bamboo and thatched with leaves which are cured with smoke. One half of the house belongs to the women and woe to the man who enters at the wrong door. Several families sometimes live in one house. They are polygamists. Cook their food in earthenware pots which they make themselves. I can not believe with Mr. Young that they are cannibals. Though the Chunclis are, who inhabit the country of the Ucayali and Huallaga Rivers, and there may possibly be some to the north of the Amazon in Ecuador.

I PRIZE the friendship of the Jiveros very highly. Among them a number of chiefs. Had many invitations to go on head-hunting expeditions but, needless to say, I had other work to do that I could not neglect. Also the German Mr. Young speaks of went into the country for the express purpose of learning the process of reducing the heads, which he no doubt learned, but not in a manner that left him able to impart the knowledge to the world. And that same process I had complete control of my curiosity in regard to it. The heads are taken in battle, the same as our North American Indians took scalps, though the head of the vanquished is not always taken. The taking of the head signifies defiance to the friends of the dead. I have heard many theories as to the process but I know nothing about it myself. It is a secret carefully guarded by the people.

I did have a couple of the heads, which are difficult to procure at present. There were two sold in Duran last year.

THE nearest towns to the Jivero country are Sigsig and Indanca, on the Pauti River; Loja, on the head of the Zamora, and Gualaquiza, all in Ecuador.

Will be glad to give any further information I have, and may have a lot more two years hence, as I intend to go back into that country the latter part of the present year.

There are many interesting facts concerning the Jiveros, but as I'm a much better prospector than writer, will let it go at this.—G. S. VERBECK.

YOU probably know by this time that the publication of our younger brother *Romance* has been suspended until times get better. Here is the statement given to readers.

OF COURSE if we had been wizards we could, in the Winter of 1918, when the publication of *Romance* was decided upon, have foreseen just what general conditions would be at the beginning of the Winter of 1920. But, like most other people at that and other times, we weren't wizards. So now, with *Romance* passing its first birthday successfully and well squared away for an even more satisfactory second year, the ax of General Conditions falls upon our undeserving neck.

You all know what General Conditions are. The particular General Conditions that press hardest in this case are the paper shortage, the badly deranged transportation system and the high cost of labor. The whole magazine field suffers under the pressure and inevitably gives ground in one way or another, but it is hardest on the young little magazines who have not yet had time to become adults. *Romance* will go into a state of suspended animation.

Just that. For *Romance* has proved its ability to succeed and, when General Conditions become

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normal and it is once more possible to secure all the paper needed and to get a magazine distributed so that buyers can buy it, why then we expect to bring *Romance* to life again and go on where we left off.

So, when you find yourself realizing that G. C. have struggled back to normal, whenever that may be, take a look at the news-stands to see whether *Romance* is not again in its old place.

We are sorry that we must say even *au revoir*, for we here in the office have not only enjoyed making the magazine but have found you pleasant company along the way. And we are sorry that we can not give you at once the good things we had gathered. There were so many we were particularly eager to pass on to you. We shall keep those we may, but, in fairness,we can hold for indefinite publication only such as our authors are willing to leave on that basis.

Those of you who are regular subscribers have already been notified by mail and your accounts adjusted.

And so it remains only to say the *au revoir*, to voice again our hope that the G. C. will hurry back to normal and to thank you very sincerely for your pleasant comradeship along the way.

ARTHUR S. HOFFMAN.

The last instalment of the serial by Beatrice Grimshaw, "The Terrible Island," therefore did not reach *Romance* readers through the magazine. So that they may not be disappointed we have had this last instalment specially printed on loose sheets which we will supply gratis on request.

Let me delay long enough to answer any question that may have arisen in your minds as to the effect upon *Adventure* of our having had to tuck its younger brother away until general conditions become normal. *Adventure* had the advantage of starting when general conditions were settled, and the further advantage of building slowly and very solidly. When the stress came it was full grown and husky. It has to face the same conditions all other magazines must face but, as comparative news-stand reports show, *Adventure* has a strength that will carry it as far as internal strength can carry any magazine. If *Romance*, just learning to walk, had to be put to bed till times get better, that makes *Adventure's* chances for paper just so much better. *Adventure* is now realizing the benefits of its solid foundations and it wants you, who helped make it, to know this.

Indeed, it relieves the paper shortage to such an extent that we are now able to restore the pages we were compelled to take from *Adventure* and, beginning with the issue dated January 3, 1921, our magazine goes back to one hundred and ninety-two pages and the old ten-point type. In other words, we are carrying out our purpose of giving you all that general conditions allow us to give. We were forced to drop thirty-two pages and, in order not to cut down the actual amount of reading you would receive, to change to a smaller type. But the instant the pressure relaxes enough to make it possible we put the magazine back on the old basis.

As to the future, until general conditions become more settled we do not dare make any promises, except one, for the future of all magazines is too uncertain. The one promise we can and do make is to give you the most and best we are able. We can also give you the assurance that little old *Adventure* is likely to come through the fire as little singed as any of them.—A. S. H.

LOOKING AHEAD FOR DEMOCRACY

SOME time ago this department told you of a case where the practical teaching of practical citizenship has actually been made a part of the regular school course—the work of the Americanization Society of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Frank L. Dykema, secretary, 318 Shepard Bldg. Some of the brief essays written by the children were given. This time I want to show you samples of the lessons given to the children.

I'm not going to talk about them. You will do your own thinking and no comments of mine will be needed to make plain what a vastly different country this would be and how many of our serious problems would cease to be serious if all the children in the United States were thus brought up in a real and common-sense understanding of the duties of citizenship. *Why isn't it done?*

And why do *you* just sit back and think about it?

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THE Americanization Society of Grand Rapids at first confined itself to getting the voters to vote. As you see, they have wisely enlarged their scope. And I think their work will prove to them that it will be wise to enlarge it still more. You will note, too, that they are Americanizing the native-born as well as the foreign-born—something that has nearly always been omitted, to our bitter cost.

Will you just read these sample school lessons and think it over? Wouldn't you like to have your own children and the children of your town taught the same kind of one hundred per cent Americanism? And wouldn't you like to have the coming generation of America's citizens made into that kind of citizen?—A. S. H.

Monday, March 29, 1920.

CITIZENSHIP—American government is government by the people. The people govern by voting because by voting they elect officials who carry on the business of the government and make the laws. *If nobody voted, there would be no government.* If only part of the men and women voted, and things are not done right and poor officials are elected, *then those who do not vote are at fault.* If the good of the whole people depends on all of the men and women taking part in the government by voting, and a part of them do not vote, then those who do not vote are not honest with those who do their duty. *Citizenship means that each person gives a square deal* to every other person, and they can only do that by voting every election day.

WHAT TO DO—Bring to school a list of the names of all men and women in your families, who are twenty-one years old or more, and give this list to your teacher. Give the names of mother, father, sisters, brothers and relatives in families where there are no children attending the public or parochial schools. *Make each one of them promise to vote on Monday, April fifth,* and to save their *Voter's Certificate* for you.

AMERICANIZATION SOCIETY.

Tuesday, March 30, 1920.

CITIZENSHIP—If there were a big block of wood standing in your yard and you put kerosene on it and touched a match to it, it would burn and become ashes. If, instead of burning it, you allowed it to stand without protection from the weather, it would, after a long time, gradually rot away to dust. In either case, *the block of wood would be completely destroyed;* the only difference being that burning it would be more violent and quicker than allowing it to rot, but the result would be the same in each case.

In this country, we have, what we call anarchists, who would destroy government in the same way that you might destroy the block of wood, by violent methods. *We also have men and women citizens who ignore their government, who do not vote, and who do not think about public welfare, and they are destroying government just as much as the anarchists,* only like the neglected block of wood, it takes longer, but the result is the same.

WHAT TO DO—Talk with mother and father about the importance of voting and tell them that the quickest way to stop the anarchist and the radical is *to put life into our government* by taking part in it by voting. Ask the people on your list, the list of the members of your family, *to promise to vote Monday, April fifth,* and save their *Voter's Certificate* for you.

AMERICANIZATION SOCIETY.

Wednesday, March 31, 1920.

CITIZENSHIP—If all of the boys and girls in this room belonged to a Garden Club, and all the things that were raised in their gardens, were used for the benefit of all of the members of the Garden Club, and if each child worked faithfully in his garden, then every member of the Garden Club would have been *fair* to every other member of the Club, and each one would have done his part for the good of all.

If, on the other hand, one-half of the members of the Garden Club did their work badly, and some of them did not even start a garden, then those who did their work badly and those who did not start a garden at all *would be dishonest with the other members of the Club.*

Our American Government is just like the Garden Club. *Its success is dependent on the faithfulness of all of the people,* and we cannot have good government if part of the people are careless about voting, which is their part in government, and the welfare of all of the people is affected when part of them neglect their duty, just as the welfare of the Garden Club would be affected by those children who failed with their gardens. *It is only fair to others to vote election day.*

WHAT TO DO—Remember the story of the garden and tell it to mother and father and ask them to *promise to do their duty on Monday, April fifth, by going to their voting place, and casting their ballot.* Tell them to be sure to get their *Voter's Certificate* and to save it for you.

AMERICANIZATION SOCIETY.

Friday, April 2, 1920.

CITIZENSHIP—Do your parents ever remind you to do things that you have forgotten to do? Possibly mother sometimes reminds the daughter that she has forgotten to dust her room or make her bed, or maybe the son is reminded that he has not shoveled the snow, or mowed the grass, or failed in some other household duty, that the family expects of him. Each member of each family has his duties, and when he fails to do them, it inconveniences all of the other members of the family, and so it is right that the mothers and fathers should remind the sons and daughters when they do wrong.

The city is a family too, only it is larger than the one that lives within the four walls of the home. *The members of the family of the city* have duties, just as the members of the *family within the home* have duties. One of the duties of the mothers and fathers is to vote on every election day and when they fail to vote, they are doing just what the children do when they fail to do those duties that the mothers and fathers tell them to do. If mothers and fathers expect the children to do their duty in the home, *then it is right that the children expect the mothers and fathers to do their duty in the family of the city* because the future welfare of the children depends upon the way the mothers and fathers do their duty now.

WHAT TO DO—The children must remind their mothers, fathers and the other members of their families who are on their list, of their duty, that each member of the *family of the city* IS EXPECTED TO PERFORM—TO VOTE ON *Monday, April fifth,* and the CHILDREN SHOULD TELL THEM OFTEN enough so they will not forget it.

AMERICANIZATION SOCIETY.

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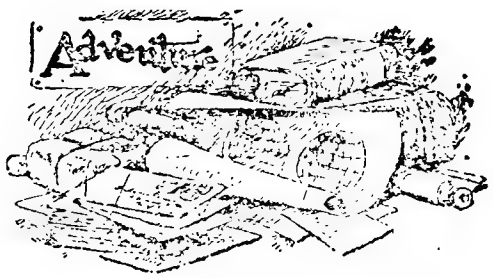

VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES FREE TO ANY READER

THESE services of *Adventure* are free to *any one*. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules*, thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you, *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 Mountfort St, Boston, Mass., can supply Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL SELL: Complete files of *Adventure* for 1917, 1918, 1919. $10.00 plus postage or express.—J. FORTAIN, 1529 State St., New Haven, Conn.

WILL SELL: Complete files of *Adventure* from Vol. 1, No. 1 up to and including Vol. 19. $1.50 a volume plus express.—Address IRA B. LAHMER, Walsenburg, Colo.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding adress for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of this issue.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 519 Citizens Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the department in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert will probably give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their departments subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but for their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose department it seems to belong.**

1. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

2. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, Seattle Press Club, 1309 Fifth Ave., N. E., Seattle, Wash. Covering ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; seafaring on fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks, small-boat sailing, and old-time shipping and seafaring.

3. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Such questions as pertain to the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire should be sent to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Covering Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; river, lake and road travel, game, fish and woodcraft; furs, freshwater pearls, herbs; and their markets.

5. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Orlando, Florida. Covering Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

6. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Maine. Covering Maine; fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

7. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. Covering the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Hunting, fishing, travel, Early history of Missouri Valley.

8. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big timber sections.

9. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
LARRY ST. JOHN, 1101 Kimball Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

10. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. Covering California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

11. Western U. S. Part 2 and Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 20 Ashland Blvd., Chicago., Covering Texas, Oklahoma, and the border States of old Mexico: Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history, industries.

12. Mexico Part 2 Southern Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, 381 Broadway Street, San Francisco, Cal. Covering Lower California and that part of Mexico lying south of a line drawn from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, commerce, business and general conditions.

★ *(Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents in stamps NOT attached)*
Return postage not required from U. S. or Canadian soldiers, sailors or marines in service outside the U. S., its possessions, or Canada

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14. ★ North American Snow Countries Part 1
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Covering Height of Land and northern parts of Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. R'y); southeastern parts of Ungava and Keewatin. Trips for sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Summer, Autumn and Winter outfits; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit.

15. North American Snow Countries Part 2
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont. Covering southeastern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation.

15. ★ North American Snow Countries Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Covering southern Ontario and Georgian Bay. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing.

16. North American Snow Countries Part 4
ED. L. CARSON, Burlington, Wash. Covering Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

17. North American Snow Countries Part 5
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Covering Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

18. North American Snow Countries. Part 6
H. S. BELCHER, The Hudson's Bay Company, Ft. Alexander, Manitoba, Canada. Covering Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel.

19. North American Snow Countries Part 7
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Richmond, Quebec. Covering New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper and wood-pulp industries, land grants, water-power.

20. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 632 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. Covering customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

21. Central America
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, customs, language, game, local conditions, minerals, trading.

22. South America. Part 1
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

23. South America. Part 2
P. H. GOLDSMITH, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Covering Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

24. Asia, Southern
GORDON MCCREAGH, 21 East 11th St., New York City. Covering Red Sea, Persian Gulf, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Siam, Andamans, Malay States, Borneo, the Treaty Ports; hunting, trading, traveling.

25. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, Box 807A, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N. M. Covering history, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, exports and imports, manufacturing.

26. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Maine. Covering Japan; commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

27. Russia and Eastern Siberia
MAJOR A. M. LOCHWITZKY (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), Austin, Texas. Covering Petrograd and its province; Finland, northern Caucasus; Primorsk District, Island of Sakhalien; travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

28. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Covering the Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, the Niger River from the delta to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora; tribal histories, witchcraft, savagery.

29. Africa Part 2
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Covering Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

30. ★ Africa Part 3 Portuguese East Africa
R. W. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Covering trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

31. ★ Africa Part 4. Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East Africa, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Care Society of Authors and Composers, Central Buildings, Tothill St., Westminster, London, England. Covering geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, mining, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, opportunities for adventure and sport. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

32. ★ New Zealand and the South Sea Islands
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Covering New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa. Travel, history, customs; opportunities for adventurers, explorers and sportsmen. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

33. ★ Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, Hotel Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Covering customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, politics, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

FIREARMS, PAST AND PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers and ammunition. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns (including foreign and American makes). J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers (including foreign and American makes). D. WIGGINS, Salem, Ore.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Commission, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

★(*Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents—in Mr. Mills's case 8 cents—in stamps NOT attached*)

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After Big Game and Fur

TOO late, of course, to think of acting this year on the information given below, but it will bear thinking over by those of us who would like to make the trip next season:

Question:—"My partner and myself have been thinking for some time of making a trip into northern British Columbia or Alberta for big game and possibly some trapping if we should be lucky enough to find the two in the same locality. Can you advise us as to the best territory for such a trip? We had thought of several places but could get no data covering big-game hunting there. We wish to make the trip in early in the Fall and stay until after the Spring break-up.

Are the headwaters of the Finley River in British Columbia as little explored and as good big-game hunting as they are reported to be?

Are there heavy timber and good hunting territory north of the Peace River near the head of the Beaver River in the Caribou Mountains northeast of Fort Vermillion?

Also, according to a map we have here, the country between McMurray and Lake Athabaska is shown to be fairly heavily timbered and is said to contain many small fur-bearers but practically no large game except an occasional caribou.

Can you set us straight on these points or give us the address of some sportsman who can? Which of these three territories would you consider the best for such a trip? We will have something like $5,000 to put into this trip, but would like to make a small percentage of our expenses back by working a small trap-line. Some articles in the *National Sportsman* and other sporting magazines give the headwaters of the Finley a very good reputation for sheep, goat and bear and practically virgin country providing you penetrate far enough.

We are both well able to handle a canoe in white water and anything in the packing line from a shoulder pack to diamond hitch. We wish to get all the data we can on this so we will make no mistake when we outfit for the trip.

We have Newton rifles chambered for the .30-06 cartridge and .45 Colt's autos for side-arms that we have used in Minnesota and parts of eastern Canada. Would these arms have sufficient range and killing power for mountain goat and grizzlies? Also, can you give us the address of some big sporting-goods houses in Edmonton from whom we can get prices on the cost of an outfit?"—E. J. NELSON, Detroit, Mich.

Answer, by Mr. Carson:—I think you would do well to write the Chief Game Guardian, Edmonton, Alberta, for a copy of the game laws and also your information as to an outfitting concern. Aside from the Hudson's Bay Company and Revillon Frères, Peace River, Alta., I would not like to recommend any one. I know the two mentioned above bear good reputations, but aside from that can go no further.

The Finley River is good all right and so is the Stikine; but these are both in B. C., and that country does not issue trapping licenses to non-residents.

Anywhere around Fort Vermillion is good, but it is a long way from anywhere, as the cowboy said of New York. There is excellent hunting nearer Peace River (city) and if you would write R. A. MacLeod, Peace River, Alta., he would be able to give you first-hand information as to locations, outfitters and so forth.

Your guns are perfectly good. You will have to deposit the duty on them when you cross the line, but this will be returned providing you get back in six months. Go in as homeseekers and all your stuff can go in free of duty.

There is excellent hunting all through that country, but I question if you will find any caribou around McMurray. It used to be a good place for beaver and rats with other game, but you will probably have to go a long way north for your caribou. As for timber, there is plenty of it for game country, and at the present price of fur you should be able to break even and outfit well at that.

The Peppiest Race on Earth

MR. YOUNG, who's been there as well as most other places in the New World, says it is— But here; read for yourself. And incidentally learn something about the progress of aviation in South America:

Question:—"As directed by *Adventure*, may I have the pleasure of seeking information from you with reference to South America.

I have served for three years in the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force during the war and would like to get into touch with same in any state in S. A. for which you give information.

Have any squadrons been formed in Peru, and whether under British or American control, and for what purpose are they used? What effect has the climate on aviation? Are there many casualties directly due to climatic conditions?

Could you give me the name or names of any aviation companies to whom I might offer my services as a fully qualified pilot or navigator?"—ALLAN MCGREGOR, Sussex, N. B., Canada.

Answer, by Mr. Young:—During and since the European war it has been very difficult to obtain data covering the operations of airplanes in Latin America due to several causes. However, I do know that American and French instructors were engaged in Guatemala City and that the Guatemalan government had several French and American planes. This was also the case in Costa Rica.

I heard that native officers were being instructed in Managua, Nicaragua, by Americans who were stationed near at Campo Marte. I have had no word from Salvador, Honduras, or Panama. Colombia ordered several large German and English planes to install a mail service between the capital and the coasts and had engaged German instructors to come and start the service and teach natives to run them. This was about a year ago. I don't know whether it was a private or government affair, but presume it is the latter. The Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C., possibly will be able to give you the details of this project.

Nothing doing in Ecuador to my knowledge. Many reports have come from Peru and Chile lately of various proposed lines, etc.

The latter country is pretty much up to the times. They have a fine army and navy and

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have more "pep" than any race in the world. The population is pretty well mixed up with English and other white races and the foreign population is large. It is in this country that British interests largely predominate, and an immense number of English and Anglo-Chileans are to be found in all the large cities, with a great number of Germans and hyphenated Germans in the southern part.

If such squadrons have been formed you might be able to obtain details from Wessel, Duval & Co., Boston, Mass.; or W. R. Grace & Co., New York City, who run ships down at frequent intervals and have large interests in the country.

Both Argentine and Brazil have kept pretty well abreast of the times. Trips over the Andes by aeroplane were being made for experimental and endurance records as long ago as 1910. However, much of this work is directly under all the governments involved.

The only authentic dope on a proposed service which would require several good men is the one in Colombia; and I am not sure whether this has yet been started. I would consider that there is an excellent chance to enter the army of almost any of the Latin American countries or to engage as an instructor for native material.

I saw the flight made across Panama after several unsuccessful attempts; and from all accounts the air was very bad, caused by the proximity of the two oceans. I think this narrow neck of land presents more difficulties than the others, for I saw flights made in Rio Janeiro, Buenos Aires and several other South American cities in very fine shape.

All of which goes to show that I don't know much to tell you along the lines you request. Try Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C., attention Mr. W. A. Reid, Chief Clerk.

Can It Be Done?

HAS it ever been done? Captain Dingle doubts it; and he's done one or two incredible sea-stunts himself. Incidentally, *Adventure* printed the log Captain Dingle kept on the voyage to which he refers:

Question:—"Am desirous of obtaining some information but do not find any of your "Ask *Adventure*" editors who seem to cover the territory. Can you help me out?

Wish information on the following items:

1. Can I proceed from Washington, D. C., *via* the Atlantic coast to the mouth of the Mississippi in an 18-foot Kennebec (torpedo model) canoe?

2. If so, where can I get maps of the route?

3. Approximately how long should such a trip take?

4. What fishing and shooting equipment would you recommend for such a trip?

5. What is the best time of year to take trip?"—CON O'LEARY, Washington, D. C.

Answer, by Captain Dingle:—Far be it from me to tell a man that something can not be done! Your letter was forwarded to me by *Adventure*, and I shall try not to be too discouraging. Somebody told me I could not take a small sailboat to Bermuda single-handed, so I took her; but when canoes are talked about for a sea voyage I begin to put on extra socks.

Frankly, I can not imagine any such craft as an 18-foot canoe making such a trip unless you absolutely wait for perfect weather at every stopping-place, and that would stretch your trip out to almost a year, I believe if you made it even then. There are many leagues of open sea and bad coast between the places you mention, with no shelter to run for, and it takes a very small gale to kick up a nasty sea in Florida Straits—far too heavy for any canoe I ever saw.

If you took a mate along, and could depend on always finding a bit of beach where you could pick up the canoe and tote her above water-line in a sudden breeze, you might very well make it. But you can not always find that beach when needed. I would advise you to ship your boat by train to Pensacola, or at least to Tampa, and finish the voyage by canoe. The best time of the year would be before July or after October (the inclusive hurricane months generally).

As for camping and fishing and hunting gear, I think Mr. R. S. Spears, of "Ask *Adventure*," section 4, will be able to advise you. If you try it, good luck! But I'd prefer a heavier boat for the trip.

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to Ask *Adventure* editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

The Hole in the Wall

ANOTHER pet illusion gone to smash. Here fiction readers, many of them, have doubted the existence of this notorious bad-men's stronghold. But there really was such a place—is still, in fact, minus the bad-men, all of whom have gone to where Dives prayed for rain:

Question:—"Can you give any information regarding a so-called "Hole in the Wall" in Montana?

While I have been in the State twice I never could gather any information as to its location in that particular State. If you are familiar with some of its "mythical tragedies" will you answer the following questions pursuant to Ask *Adventure*?

1. Is it actually true that there was such an abode for outlaws, etc.?

2. Did men escape the penalty of their crimes by abiding in the fastness of its security?

3. Can you give me its location?

It is possible that your department doesn't cover Montana. If this be true I am at loss as to whom to write, for I find that Montana is not listed under any department at all."—R. PETER COATES, Columbus, O.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—The Hole in the Wall was for years a rendevous for outlaws and a regular hiding-place for them. It was a "thorn in the flesh" to county, State and Federal officers. It was a fort, in fact, for the protection of murderers, thieves and all kinds of desperate characters.

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As near as I have been able to find out it was so named because of there being but one entrance to the little valley—through a gap in a rock wall or cliff. This made it practically impregnable.

Write to Hal G. Everts, Hutchinson, Kansas, and ask him about it. He has been up there and can give you full description of it.

The tragedies were not all mythical up there. Many a hard-natured brute of a man paid the debt to civilization with his life right there. Many an officer did the square thing by his neighbors in the effort to clean out that nest of devils and died of gunshot wounds.

Some criminals lived there for years, I believe, safe from the law. They raided peaceable folks to get food, clothing, anything they might desire. It was a fine thing for the State when that nest was broken up. Sooner or later they all get theirs, these predatory animals of the gunman type; and they lived like animals of that type.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

RUSSELL, WILLIAM THOMAS. Brother. Born in Hickman Co., Tenn., in 1869. When last heard from was going to Canada. Any information will be appreciated.—Address. PLEASANT F. RUSSELL, Relief Home, 7th Ave., Sunset, San Francisco, Cal.

ST. AMOND, MARCEL. Last heard from at Milwaukee, Wis. Please write to your brother at once.—Address THOMAS ST. AMOND, 115 Co. 3rd Marines, Azua, Santo Domingo.

MILLER, ORVILLE EDWARD. Son. Left Indianapolis in February or March 1917. Can not be located. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—MRS. CLARA THOMPSON. Roosevelt Hotel, Indianapolis, Ind.

MACK. Where are you? Write to M. S. F. formerly from Ft. Stevens, Oregon, Ord. Dept. Have some news if you see this before Winter.—Address MATT KOVASH, Box 181, Ely, Minn.

CLEMENTSON, ANTON. Formerly of Minneapolis, Minn. Last heard of in Los Angeles, Cal., about 1916. Any information will be appreciated by his friend.—Address ROBERT MILNE, 1702 N. Mich. Ave., Saginaw, Mich.

DORAIS, A. R. Husband. Please communicate with Bell at once. Urgent. Any information of his whereabouts will be appreciated by his sick wife.—Address MRS. A. R. DORAIS, 657 Cordova St., East, Vancouver, B. C. Canada.

CLAIBORNE, HARRY E. Last heard of in Los Angeles, Cal., July 23rd 1920. Mother is ill and everything is forgiven. Any one knowing his whereabouts please notify his wife.—MRS. HARRY CLAIBORNE, or his Mother, MRS. J. A. LANGHLIN, 322 E. Broadway, Anaheim, Cal.

HURLEY, JAMES. Last seen in Milwaukee 1917. Married in Milwaukee July 1917, and left same month for a job in Arkansas. Usually work as foreman or superintendent on foundation and compressed air construction jobs. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—H. E. HURLEY, 5107 Hazel St., Seattle, Wash.

YOUKER, MISS MAUDE. Formerly a stenographer in Seattle, Wash. Please send address to MISS FRANCES W. SPEAR, Box 5, Santa Monica, Cal.

HAMMER or HAMNER, LULU V. Was teacher in the Belmont School at Belmont, Texas, about six years ago. Do you remember the last time we met was coming home from Waco and I walked home with you on a Sunday night? Would like to hear from you.—Address CLARA E. LANDON, care of *Adventure.*

LAVELLE, MISS BILLIE or BEATRICE. Last heard from last August in Denver. Please write—Maiden name, Miss Marie Westrope. Marriage name, MRS. THOS. H. FOX, JR., Hotel Savoy, Lincoln, Nebr.

KEITH, JOYCE. Would like to hear from you at once. Address Maiden name, Miss Marie Westrope. Marriage name, MRS. THOS. H. FOX, JR., Savoy Hotel, Lincoln, Nebr.

WHEELER, Bill. From around Boston. Last seen in Paris and Rouen, France, September 1919. Information would be thankfully received by an old buddy of Langres, St. Nazaire and Montoir. Address T. W. S., care of *Adventure.*

STOREY, ALBERT. Please write home of your whereabouts. Every one is worried.—SISTER.

BEHRENS, E. A. Left home July fifteenth without any reason, and has not been heard from since. Please communicate with your wife and children.—Address MRS. E. A. BEHRENS, 86 Ferry St., Jersey City, N. J.

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the first February issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

NEWLAND, JOHN WESTLEY. Last heard of near Xenia, Ohio. He is about five feet nine inches tall; age about sixty years. Any information will be appreciated by his son.—Address PVT. CARL W. NEWLAND, CO. M., 17th inf. Camp Meade, Md.

SCHREIBER, CARL. "Charley." Father. Last seen in Lewistown, Mont., about eight years' ago. He is about six feet tall, and is sixty-four years of age, dark complexion, heavy-set, brown eyes. Russian by birth. Blacksmith and carpenter by trade. Lived in Braddock, Pa., for eighteen years. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address JULIUS SCHREIBER, Box 195, Terry, Mont.

FERRIS, JOHN and JAMES. Moved with their parents from Ewing College, Ill., to Wichita, Kansas, about 1887. Any information concerning them or their parents will be appreciated.—Address WILSON C. KNOWLES, Box 418, Elma, Wash.

MILLER, PETER. Father. Born in England, lived in St. Louis, and came to Phila., Pa., about 1897. Age, about sixty-five. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address MRS. J. M. WEISER, 106 Charles St., New York, N. Y.

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MORRIS, WILLIAM JR. Son. Last heard from in Fayetteville, N. C. Has not written to friends or relatives since November, 1919. Write home at once.—FATHER.

FITCH, LESLIE H. Last heard of leaving for France from Quantico, Va. with the U. S. Marines. Any one, knowing his present address please write.—G. C. TRIPLETT Port Orchard, Wn.

DUTCH MACK. Please write me or J. T. at the same place you met me. Am in bad condition. It will be confidential. Address your wife.—MRS. LULA MACKLEUM, Sta. A Box 50, Chattanooga, Tenn.

MCONOLOGUE, CORPORAL JAMES. Or any of the men of Co. C, 5th Field Signal Bn. attached to the 4th U. S. Infantry who knew Pvt. Joseph Marion Schuler who was killed Oct. 4th, 1918, near Madeleine in the Argonne and buried at Nantoillois, please write his mother.—Address MRS. JOSEPH MARION SCHULER, Box 759, Houston, Texas.

THE following have been inquired for in either the Mid-November or First December issues of Adventure. They can get name of the inquirer from this magazine:

Anna, N. W.; Austin, L. C.; Barron, J. E.; Brown, Carl.; Calamia, James A.; Coombs, Peggie; Davis, Sgt. Wm.; D'rrico, Louis; Ed Bonny or Red; Everding, Alfred; Fiedler, Joe; Gardner, James E.; Giseler, Barney; Hall, Charles and Henrietta; Johnson, Louis: Kennedy, Bill; Law, Merton Edward; Lawton James; Linn, Cyrus H.; McDonough, Roderick; McWilliams, Walter; Mills, Lynden; Morre, William; Murphy, Jesse T.; Parker, Donald W.; Perkins; Chas.; Phillips, Duke and Kaddie; Phillpott, George Victor; Schultz, William; Soontupe, Sam; Staedtler, Emil; Turner, William; Vallen, Arthur; Van Save, Mamie; Wesner, Charles; *Alias* Charles Brown;

MISCELLANEOUS. Any one who served with D. 2. F. A. in Philippines in 1911; Friends of Broadway Whitey; Members of two I. O. G. T. Lodges; Parents of baby girl (Name may be Haven); Relatives of Mary McAulay.

MANUSCRIPTS UNCLAIMED

HASTLAR GALBREATH; Ruth Gilfillan; Jack P. Robinson; Ray Ozmer; Miss Jimmie Banks; O. B. Franklin; Byron Chisholm; Wm. S. Hilles; A. B. Paradis; G. E. Hungerford; E. E. S. Atkins; E. Murphy; A. Gaylord; E. J. Moran; F. S. Emerson; J. E. Warner; L. E. Patten; T. T. Bennett; Sinn Cardie; James Mosse; C. E. Wilson; R. W. Kimsey; C. H. Huntington; D. Polowe.

UNCLAIMED mail is held by Adventure for the following persons, who may obtain it by sending us present address and proof of identity.

BEATON, SGT. MAJOR G. M.; Benson, Edwin Worth; Bertsch, Elizabeth; Bonner, Major J. S.: Mrs. Brownell; Carpenter, Capt. Robert S.; "Chink"; Coles, Bobby; Cook, Elliot D.; Cook, William N.; Cosby, Arthur F.; Crashley, Wm. T.; Eager, Paul Roman; Fairfax, Boyd; Fisher, Edward E.; Fisher, Sgt. R.; Garson, Ed.; Green, Billy; Green, W.; Hale, Robert E.; Harris, Walter J.; Hart, Jack; Harwood, J.; Hoffman, J. M.; Hughes, Frank E.; Hunt; Daniel O'Connell; Jackson, Robert R.; Kohlhammer, Jack, Kuckaby, William Francis; Kuhn, Edward; Kutcher, Sgt. Harry; Lafler, Mrs. Harry; Lancaster, C. E.; Larisey, Jack; Lauder, Harry; Lee, Dr. C.; Lee, Capt. Harry, A. R. C.; Lee, Dr. William R.; Lewis, Warburton; "Lonely Jock"; Lovett, Harold; McAdams, W. B.; MacDonald, Tony; Madsen, Sgt. E. E.; Nelson, Frank Lovell; O'Hara, Jack, Parker, G. A.; Parker, Dr. M.; Parrott, Pvt. D. C.; Phillips, Buffington; Phipps, Corbett C.; Pigeon, A. H.; Raphelson, Sampson; Rich, Wagoner, Bob; Rinkenbach, Frank; Rundle, Merrill G.; Schmidt, G.; Scott, Pvt. James F.; Swan, George L.; Tripp, Edward N.; Van Tyler, Chester; Von Gelucke, Byron; Ward, Frank B.; Wheeler, S. H.; Williams, W. P.; J. C. H.; L. T. 348; S. 177284; 439; WS-XV.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at address given us do not reach you. Address L. B. BARRETTO, care of *Adventure*.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

FIRST JANUARY ISSUE

SOUTHWARD — *Chester L. Saxby*
Arnie fights crooked work aboard ship.

A SCOUT FOR VIRGINIA. Conclusion — *Hugh Pendexter*
An Indian war in Colonial days.

THE WIND An Off-the-Trail Story — *Barry Scobee*
Which drives men mad with dead memories. (*See footnote, page 1*)

WITH THE AID OF THE SPIRITS — *L. Patrick Greene*
An experiment in diplomacy in Africa.

TRAPPED — *Gordon Young*
A midnight murder which keeps the detectives guessing.

IN HIS PRIME — *Roger Daniels*
A Great Lakes captain tries for a last "come-back."

HALF-PINT SMITH — *Charles T. Jackson*
Did you ever try to beat prohibition this way?

THE VULTURE — *Arthur O. Friel*
A scavenger in the wilds of the Amazon.

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